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MAJOR SPORTS—W. L. HUGHES, *Editor*

FOOTBALL



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Illustrated by
KATHERINE C. TRACY



A. S. BARNES AND COMPANY
NEW YORK

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Printed in the United States of America

Publishers' Note

This book has been printed from the plates of *The Book of Major Sports* edited by WILLIAM L. HUGHES, with the exception of the photographic illustrations which were supplied through the courtesy of THE FREE-LANCE PHOTOGRAPHERS GUILD.

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FOOTBALL

INTRODUCTORY

Football is believed to be the oldest outdoor game in existence. Its history may be traced back century after century until the trail is lost in antiquity. In contrast to basketball, which was deliberately invented in 1892, the game of football gradually evolved from such early games as the Greek "Harpaston" meaning the forward pass game, and the Roman Harpastum and Follis. Augustus Caesar is said to have demanded the first revision of the football rules because he thought the game played at that time too childish for soldiers. The Italian game, Calcio, was played as a mimic battle with 27 men on each side.

Many nations contributed to the evolution of football. The Celts used it as a rite in worshipping the sun gods. The Teutons played a game using skulls of enemies for balls. The Eskimos and the Aztec Indians played football with a bag of moss.

England apparently learned her football from the Roman soldiers. English legislation is marked by many laws relating to the game. Some kings and writers attack the game as wicked and brutal, others upheld it as a "charming" exercise and a useful sport. It was prohibited by law in 1314 but was regarded as a national institution throughout England in 1650.

Our modern game had its beginnings in the great secondary schools of England: Eaton, Rugby, and Winchester. Winchester gave us the rule prohibiting use of the hands by the offense and the principle of off-side play. Eaton was the first to use eleven men on a side. Rugby contributed the idea of running with the ball. English and American universities finally took up the sport and the first intercollegiate football game in America was played between Princeton and Rutgers on November 6, 1869. Football's existence in American institutions, as well as in England, has continued on a rather uncertain basis right down to the present time. At Harvard, the faculty prohibited the game, at one time, because of injuries, noise, and misconduct of players. The students held a funeral to bury "Football Fightum." Columbia abolished the game for years. Its history in other universities is similar. But in spite of all set-backs the game has not only survived, but it has grown in popularity with each succeeding year.

In making and changing the rules, from the time of Augustus Caesar down to the present, there has been a constant attempt to maintain a nice balance between the attack and the defense, and at the same time, develop a safe and interesting game. During the eighties, for example, the "scrimmage" rule, requiring that the ball be put into play in an orderly fashion, made possible the use of strategy. This, in turn, made football one of the most distinctive and fascinating of American sports. From the former game, which stressed mass play and brute force, football has become an open game which requires intelligence, speed, and endurance. The former game used only eleven men; the modern attack provides opportunity for many players. The former game aimed to develop efficient soldiers; the modern game aims to contribute to the education of boys.

CHAPTER I

FUNDAMENTALS OF HANDLING THE BALL

Success in the game of football depends primarily on skill in handling the ball, and skill in handling the body. The latter, consisting of blocking, tackling, and position play, has been called the essence of the game. The former, however, consisting of passing, catching, carrying, and kicking the ball, is also indispensable. The "foot" has not been taken out of football, some authorities to the contrary notwithstanding. Moreover, skillful passing and catching the ball, both forward and laterally, and otherwise handling it in the open field, is highly essential in the modern game. Passes would be effective strategy, merely as a threat, even though none of them were successful. Diligent practice in the techniques and tactics of passing make such plays almost as consistently successful as the running attack.

The Forward Pass.—In 1906 the National Collegiate Athletic Association was organized to save football. The most important rule change at that time was the legalization of the forward pass.

The Grip.—The palm method of holding the ball is not recommended. The ball should be gripped. The ball should be held between the thumb and fingers, preferably with the latter along the laces and somewhat behind the middle. Proper grip requires large, strong, supple hand and fingers. Strength and suppleness may be developed by means of special gripping exercises. A wide spread between thumb and fingers is desirable. The passer should be able eventually to extend his thumb in a straight line back from the index finger. This suppleness will enable him to hold the ball with the throwing hand alone, and juggle it in his hand with his arm hanging at his side, much as a baseball player is able to do with a baseball. (Figure 1).

The left hand, assuming a right-handed passer, should be used to press the ball well down into the throwing hand.

The Throw.—The throw is executed much like that of a catcher throwing to second base. It should be directly overhand for maximum accuracy. Three-quarter overarm and sidearm passes are not accurate and are easily blocked by the charging defensive linemen. The ball should be raised above and behind the shoulder and thrown from "off the ear." Prior to the throw the right foot is drawn back

and the weight is shifted back with it. The left hand and arm should extend in the direction of the throw. As the ball is thrown the weight should shift from the right to the left foot. The right elbow is flexed at first and leads the hand somewhat until it is extended forward. The ball should leave the hand six or seven feet above the ground and should be caught higher than the head. This prevents all possibilities of interception. (Figure 2).

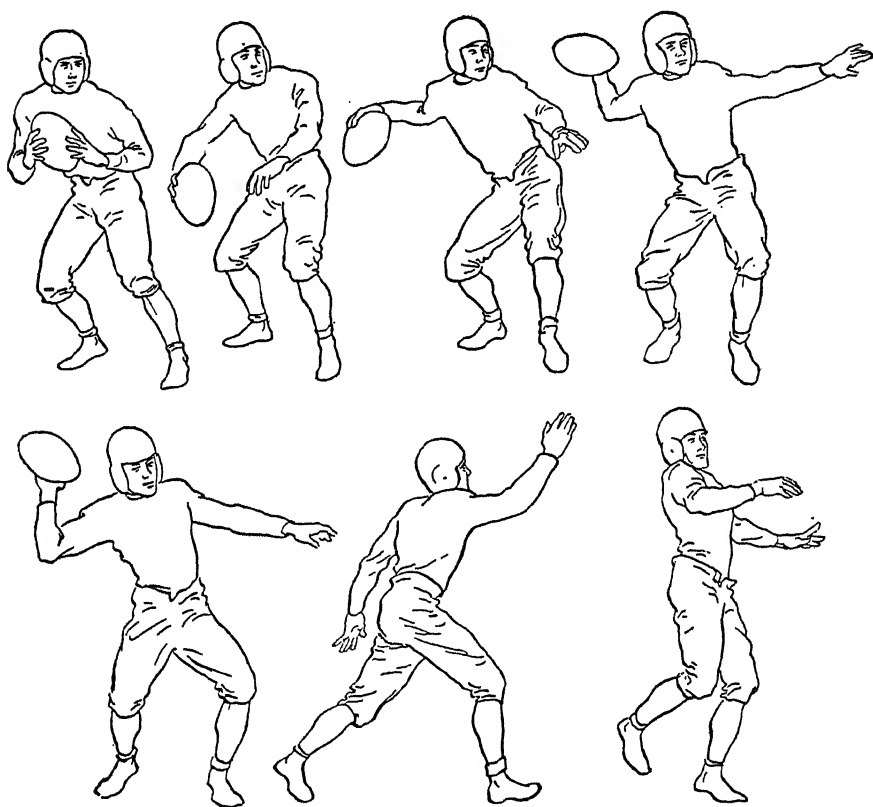


FIG. 1.—The forward pass, side view. Note how the ball is gripped and thrown overhand.

The Spiral.—The spiral is obtained by drawing the fingers and hand downward and inward as the ball is released from the finger tips. A spin of moderate speed is all that is necessary. A fast spin may cause inaccuracy in throwing and it is decidedly more difficult to catch.

When the ball is released the long axis should point up somewhat at an angle of 10 or 15 degrees with the horizontal. The air pressure under the point of the ball, which is thrown with its nose tilted

slightly upward, causes a truer, smoother flight. The ball seems to settle gently into the arms of the receiver and is easily caught. On the contrary, the ball that is thrown with its forward point tilted downward seems to bore its way through the air and is difficult to catch, since it has a habit of "doing a nose dive" at the last moment.

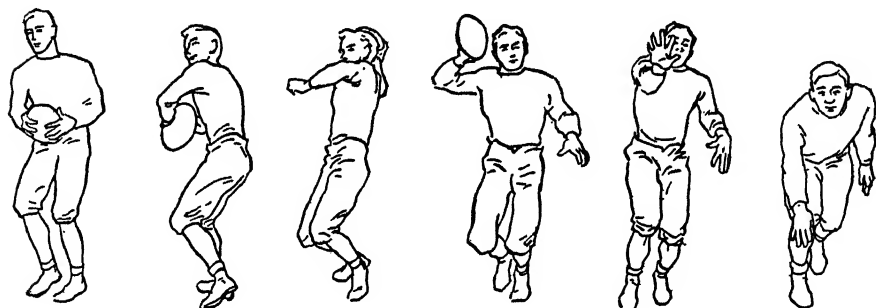


FIG. 2.—The forward pass, front view. Note how the passer brings his arm up, over, and down in the same plane which he wishes the ball to follow.

The Running Pass.—The running pass is executed with the same arm and body action as the standing pass, except that both feet are off the ground when the ball is released. Very few passers can master this skill "under fire" and should attempt it only after perfecting the pass while standing.

Passing Strategy.—Certain fundamental principles should guide the passer in throwing to receivers.

1. He should *lead the receiver* to the open side, i.e., to the side in which he is facing, or the side on which he expects to catch the ball. It is usually fatal to pass behind the receiver, since such passes are invariably intercepted.

2. Long passes should be *light* passes, i.e., thrown with a moderate spin and the point tilted slightly upward. Short passes may be thrown harder and with more snap.

3. The passer should cleverly conceal his intent. He should either look at a decoy and then turn toward the receiver, or better still, look straight downfield, keeping all receivers in the field of vision.

4. Passes should be accurately timed. Beginners invariably hold the ball too long. Passing "on the count" will break the habit.

Catching Passes.—The catch should be made with the hands. The finer muscles and nerve endings are located in the fingers. Moreover, the fingers and hands are more flexible than the arms and body.

Fingers should be spread and the entire upper part of the body should be entirely relaxed. The ball should be caught high in the air while looking back over the shoulder and running at full speed. (Figure 3).

If the pass is short the receiver should exert every possible effort to return to make the catch or prevent a possible interception.



FIG. 3.—Catching a forward pass. The player catches the ball in his hands while running full stride.

Getting Free to Catch a Pass.—Every eligible pass receiver, if he hopes to be the choice of the passer, must learn to disguise his intentions and free himself from the defense. He may:

1. Feint to block an opponent and suddenly break into the open.
2. Use a change of pace, i.e., run at ordinary speed until the ball is passed, then sprint past the opponent.
3. Feint in one direction and suddenly break the opposite way.
4. Break fast into the open and execute a sudden stop.
5. Run downfield and break at a sharp angle.
6. Follow one or more teammates acting as decoys.

The Lateral Pass.—The possibilities of the lateral, or backward, pass are only recently beginning to be fully realized. The modern football player must be adept at handling the ball out in the open as well as behind the protecting wall of the offensive line.

Methods of Throwing Lateral Passes.—There are at least three well developed methods of throwing lateral passes. The ball may be (1) passed underhand with one hand (2) pushed forward from the chest with two hands, like a basketball chest or push pass, or (3) thrown

or spiralled from over the shoulder with two hands, Canadian-Rugby fashion.

Types of Lateral Pass Plays.—The possible situations in which a lateral pass may be used are listed somewhat in the order of development of these plays.

1. The running lateral pass behind the line of scrimmage. In this play the opponents are drawn to the man with the ball who passes it just before he is tackled.

2. Lateral pass following a kick-off or punt. The object is to draw the opponents to one side of the field and then lateral pass to an open teammate.

3. The delayed lateral pass behind the line of scrimmage. The actual lateral pass follows one or more fake passes to decoys in an attempt to deceive the entire defensive team into chasing a decoy.

4. The forward-lateral pass. This play is made by the receiver of a forward pass, after the pass has been completed to him. Its chances of success are very good since defenders against the forward pass are usually taught to "play the ball" after it is thrown. This draws them all to one spot on the field and makes an ideal situation for the receiver to lateral pass to an open teammate.

5. The running lateral pass downfield and beyond the line of scrimmage. This play is none other than the English Rugby lateral pass, wherein the ball-carrier pivots, just as he is about to be tackled, thrusts his hips at the tackler, and passes back to an open teammate.

Carrying the Ball.—One of the first skills, which the beginning football player should learn, is the proper method of carrying the ball. Most fumbles at critical moments of a close game are due to faulty technique in holding the ball. The ball must not be held like a watermelon or a loaf of bread with the hand and forearm around the short axis of the ball.

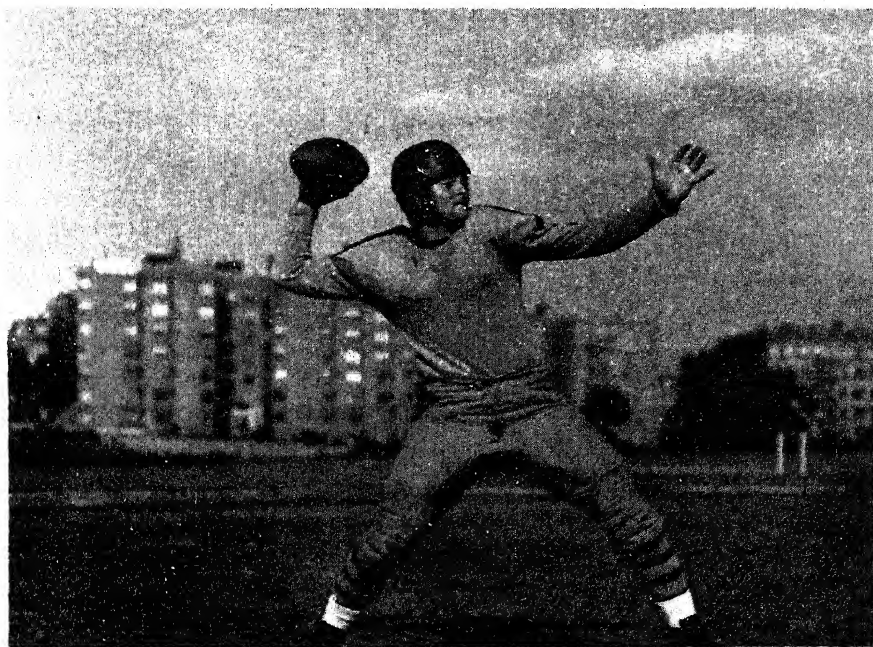
The Hand and Arm Hold.—The fingers should be spread and extended over one point of the ball. The other end should rest in the armpit, i.e., high up under the arm. Many players make the mistake of carrying the ball down on the ribs, so that daylight shows between the upper point of the ball and the armpit. The ball should be held tightly against the body. As the ball-carrier is tackled he should place the free hand on the ball as he falls to prevent fumbling. Obviously, on an off-tackle play or end run the ball should be carried in the outside arm.

When charging straight into the line, the plunger should hold his forearms in a horizontal position in front of the body. In this method each hand is spread over one end of the ball with the forearms extending along the long axis. Both hands and arms are used in holding



"Pic" (FPG)

THE FORWARD PASS (Luckman): Note the grip of the ball, the position of the feet, and the left side turned toward the direction of the throw.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE FORWARD PASS (Luckman): The right arm is cocked with the ball behind the right ear, the step is made with the left foot, and the left arm extends in the plane of the throw.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE FORWARD PASS (Luckman): The ball is thrown *directly overarm*, not three-quarter overarm or sidearm.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE FORWARD PASS (Luckman): The right wrist is rolled inward to give spin to the ball.

the ball. As he breaks through the line the ball-carrier is in position to place the ball under either arm. (Figure 4).

Changing the Ball.—It is sometimes necessary to shift the ball to the opposite arm in order to be free to straight-arm a dangerous opponent.

In one method, the free hand is placed across the point of the ball with the carrying hand. The fingers are interwoven with both hands supporting the ball on the lower end. The upper end is pulled

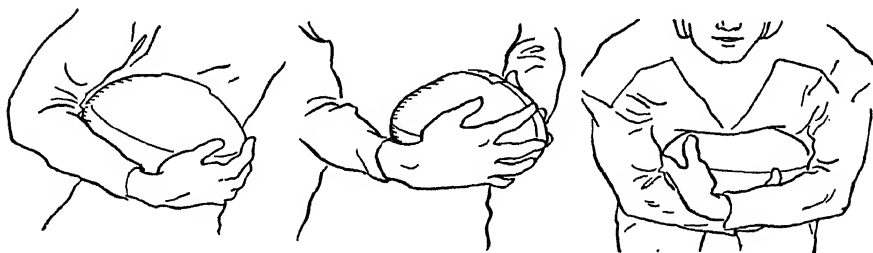


FIG. 4.—Methods of carrying the ball. The drawing in the center shows the preliminary out-in-front grip. On the left is shown the one-arm carry, on the right is the two-arm line plunger carry.

out of the armpit, moved across the chest, and placed in the opposite armpit.

In another method, the ball-carrier reaches over with the free hand, grasps the upper point of the ball in the armpit, and slides the ball across the chest with a hand grasping each end. The ball should be slid across the body with its long axis parallel to the chest or it may be turned end-for-end. The lower point should be placed in the opposite armpit.

Kicking the Ball.—The kicking game is a most fundamental phase of football, and the punt is by far the most important play in the game. The kicking game includes the punt, place and drop kicking, the kick-off, kicking form, protecting the kicker, covering and returning the kick, blocking kicks, kicking strategy and various other factors.

The Punt.—The punt consists of dropping the ball from the hands and kicking it before it hits the ground. As was stated above, it is the most important single play in football.

The Stance.—The punter should stand about ten yards behind his center. This distance may vary somewhat, however, with the weather, the time required in getting the kick away, and the strength of the defense. The kicker should stand with feet parallel and face squarely

to the front. The weight should be slightly more on the left foot, assuming a right-footed kicker, and the eyes should be on the ball. The arms, hands, and fingers should be extended forward about waist high with the fingers comfortably spread to receive the ball.

Holding and Dropping the Ball.—After the punter catches the center pass he should quickly adjust the ball for the kick. Several methods of holding the ball are in common use. In one method it is held in both hands, one along either side, and directly in front of the kicking foot. Or it may be held with one hand below, and the other above, and in front. If the latter method is employed the right hand should be under the ball with the middle finger along the middle seam. To kick high the point is tilted upward, to kick low it is

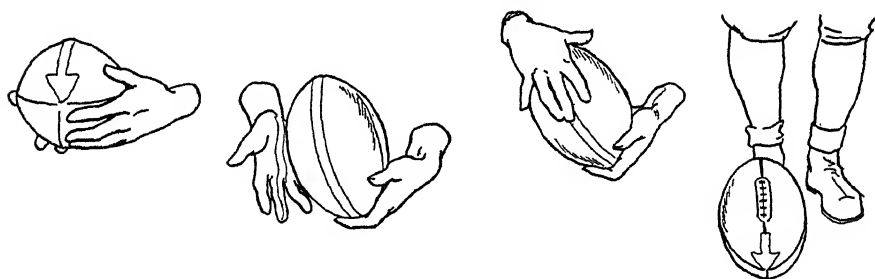


FIG. 5.—Method of holding and dropping the ball for a punt. If a chalk line is drawn along the middle seam of the ball the punter can determine by the mark on the shoe how accurately he is dropping the ball.

tilted downward. Likewise the front point is turned right or left to get direction. The ball should be dropped to the foot, without changing its position, by simply withdrawing the hand from underneath. If a chalk line is drawn along the middle seam the punter can determine by the mark on the shoe how accurately he is dropping the ball. (Figure 5).

The Steps.—The step-and-one-half method of punting is recommended. A right-footed kicker should step first with the right foot, next with the left foot, and then kick with the right. The first step is usually a short one, the second is a full stride, hence the designation step-and-a-half.

Kicking the Ball.—For an end-over-end punt the ball should be dropped on the instep with the long axis pointing directly ahead and the middle seam of the ball contacting the exact middle line of the instep. The left foot should point and the right leg should swing in

the direction of the kick. The spiral punt is obtained by pointing the front end of the ball slightly to the left. (Figures 6 and 7).

The leg kick should be a full pendulum swing exactly in the plane or direction of the kick. Swinging the leg in a side arc should be carefully avoided. This method is not reliable as the ball may slide off the toe and go out of bounds for no gain. As the legs swing

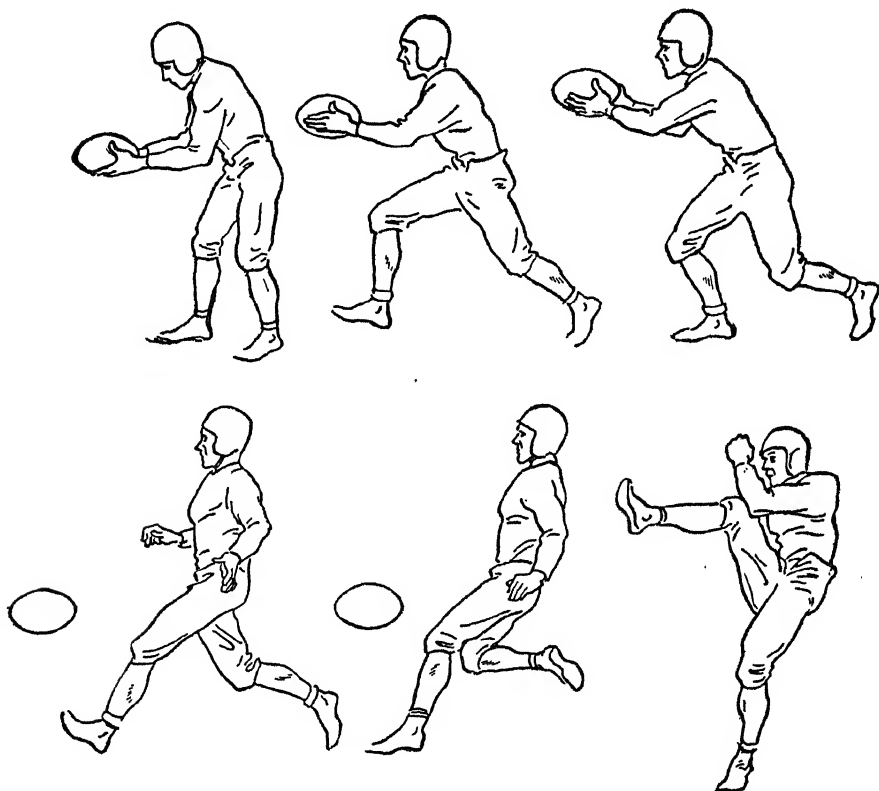


FIG. 6.—A series of correct form in punting the ball. (Side view.)

through the knee is slightly bent, but it is extended and locked at the moment of contact. The knee snap gives extra speed and distance.

The Follow-Through.—The follow-through adds distance and accuracy to the punt. Some kickers leave the ground during the follow-through, others keep the left foot planted solidly on the ground.

Punting Tactics.—Under most conditions the ball should be punted low and away from the safety man. The latter is always the best open-field runner on the opposition and it may be the height of folly to permit him to get his hands on the ball. A predetermined

target out-of-bounds should be selected and the punter should practice diligently until he can hit such an objective with great accuracy. The low kick will result in a long roll and added distance. The punt out of bounds is the best guarantee against a long return by the opposition. Coffin corner, i.e., that area near the corner where the side line

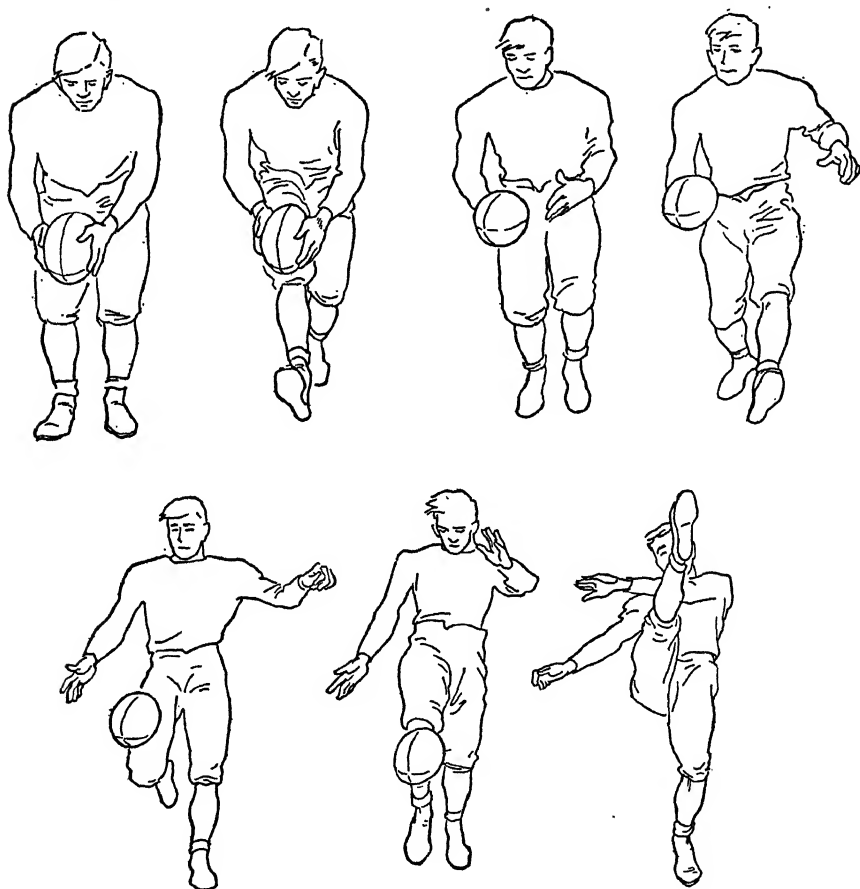


FIG. 7.—A series of correct form in punting the ball (front view). In the follow-through (lower right) the left arm of the punter is usually extended upward and outward.

and goal line intersect is the ideal objective. Due allowance should be made for the wind or the "pull" which some kickers give the ball. There is a tendency for the right-footed kicker to "pull" the ball to the left and vice versa.

The Quick Kick.—To be most effective and successful a play should be concealed until the last possible moment. This is certainly

true in punting, hence the value of the quick kick. This may be done in several ways. Some quick kickers step in place, right, left, and kick. Others use the rocker-step, i.e., they step back with the left, step forward with the left, then kick with the right. In a third method, the kicker steps back with his kicking foot, followed by a step with the left foot to bring it back of the kicking foot. The ball should be passed as this foot strikes the ground.

The first essential in kicking is consistency, i.e., sureness in getting the ball away. The next is accuracy or ability to hit a target. These are followed in importance by speed in getting the ball away, trajectory, and finally distance. The last named essential comes easily with proper form and leg conditioning.

The Place Kick.—Unless a team includes an exceptional drop kicker statistics show the place kick to be more accurate.

Holding the Ball.—If the kicker is right-footed it is recommended that the holder squat on his two feet with the right foot and knee pointing toward the line of scrimmage. He should mark a place on the ground about 6 to 8 yards behind the line and place the ball with its long axis in a vertical position on this spot.

When all teammates are ready he should extend his arms toward the center with fingers spread as a target for the center pass. He should catch the ball and stand it immediately in a vertical position under the fingers of his left hand. The latter should not be removed until the ball is kicked out from under them. The right hand may be used in "dressing" the ball, i.e., in turning the laces to the front if this can be done without delay.

The Kicker's Position and Steps.—The kicker should line up with the kicking toe directly behind the ball and on an imaginary line through the center of the cross bar and the center of the ball.

The position of the left foot will vary with individual kickers. The distance to the side will depend upon the width of the hips, and will be just far enough to permit the kicking toe to remain in the direct line of the kick. It should be somewhat behind the ball, probably from 2 to 5 or 6 inches, but the tendency of beginners is to kick from too far behind the ball. The position of the left foot must be determined by practice.

The number of steps will also vary with individuals and the distance of the kick. In a try-for-point, with the cross-bar on the goal line, the kicker could kick with a pendulum swing of the leg from a standing position. With the cross-bar back 10 yards from the goal line, steps are necessary. In a try-for-point some kickers merely hop

on the left and kick with the right. Most kickers, especially when kicking considerable distance, use the step-and-a-half as in punting. In other words, there should be a short step with the right foot, a full stride with the left foot, followed by the kick. (Figure 8).

The Kick.—The kicking foot should swing forward in an easy, relaxed manner and with increasing momentum. The knee should be bent, and the ankle rigid at a 90 degree angle with the lower leg. The leg should be snapped forward so the knee is straight at impact. The kicker should aim to strike the ball on its middle line and about midway between the lower point and the belly of the ball. The foot and leg should follow-through in the exact line of the kick.

Watch the Ball.—One of the most important factors in contributing to success is that of watching the ball. There is always a great temptation to watch the charging opponents out of the corner of the eye. This weakness probably causes more missed kicks than all other factors combined.

Protecting the Kicker.—The line from tackle to tackle should present a solid unbroken wall. The ends should play out about one space and first block the second man outside their own tackles. The backs should block to the outside much as they do for a punt. This keeps the center lane open for the kick.

The Drop Kick.—The art of drop kicking has been greatly neglected in recent years. With patient practice the modern boy can develop this skill to the same high degree of proficiency as that acquired by former greats of the gridiron.

The Hold.—The ball should be held with the long axis perpendicular to the ground between the hands and with the middle fingers of each hand on the side seams of the ball. The thumbs and other fingers should be spread normally. The ball should be dropped on its point from a position as near the ground as is comfortable. While it varies with individuals, this position is approximately opposite the left knee, assuming a right-footed kicker. If all fingers are released simultaneously, the ball should drop to the ground and rebound straight up for the short distance it bounces before contacted by the foot.

The Kick.—The steps should be taken and the foot should meet the ball in the same manner described for the place kick. As the distance grows longer the ball should be tilted back more and it should also be placed farther ahead of the foot. If the toe of the shoe is marked with chalk, the point of meeting the ball can be ascertained.

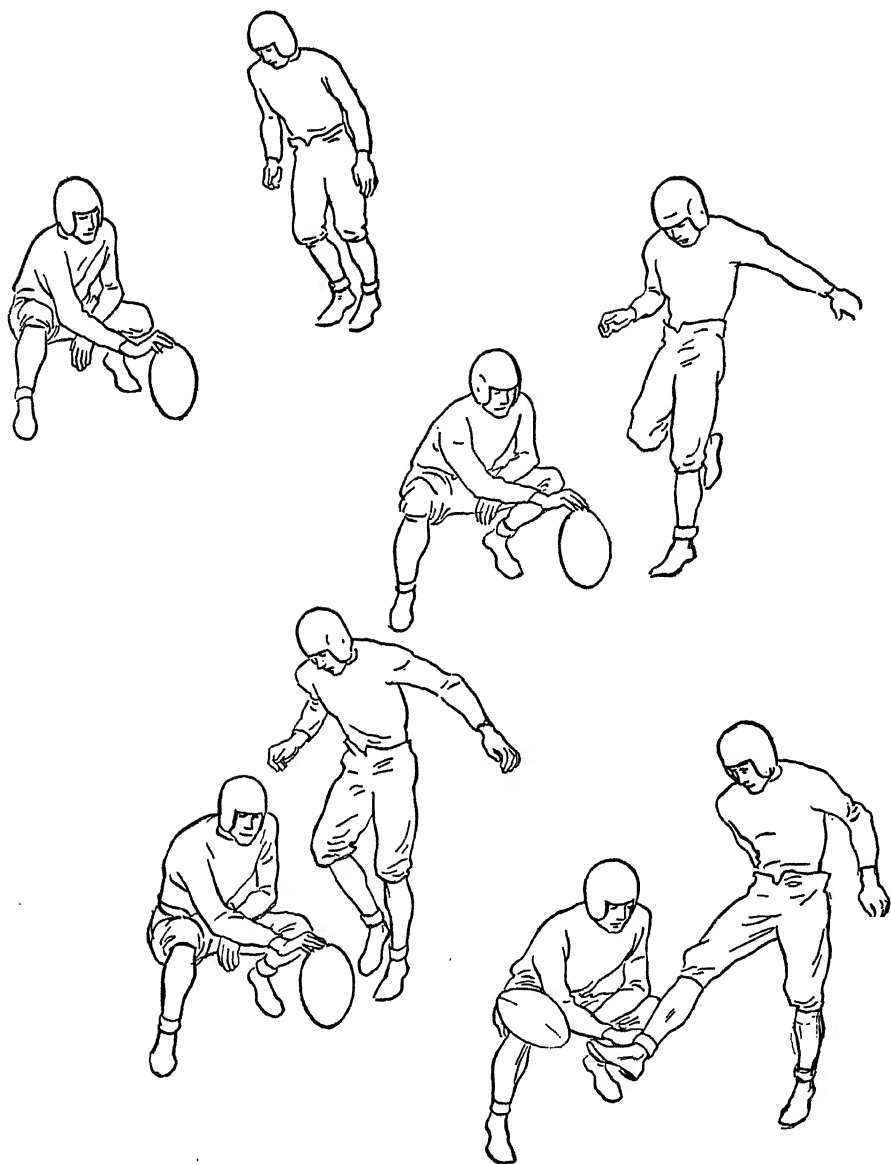


FIG. 8.—Place kicking technique. Note how the kicker watches the ball. Some holders steady the ball with the left hand.

The Multiple Kick.—The multiple kick is so named because more than one man is involved in the play. It can be used only as a punt. One man holds the ball off the ground while another player kicks it. The holder should crouch low, take the pass from center, extend his arm full length, and hold the ball in the palm of his open hand. The kicker should contact the rear point of the ball much in the same manner as the method formerly employed in booting the teed-up ball at the kickoff.

The Kickoff.—The kickoff is not only one of the most spectacular plays of the game but it is also one of the most important. It is strange, therefore, why so many coaches neglect to develop its full possibilities. It is a tremendous psychological disadvantage to the offense and a corresponding advantage to the defense to start a game on the fifteen or twenty yard line. Conversely, the ability to return the ball to the thirty-five or forty yard line is an immeasurable asset to the attack and a set-back for the defense.

The kickoff should be returned to about the thirty-five yard line to make the game even. If the attacking team is forced to punt from behind this line, it will invariably be at a disadvantage.

The Kick.—The kickoff is really a place kick with the exception that there is plenty of time to place and kick the ball. Because of the distance desired it is necessary to take several running steps before meeting the ball with the toe. Some kickers also find it helpful to tilt the ball slightly backward. Some coaches believe the kickoff should be made near the sideline since this leaves two instead of three possible returns.

Spacing.—The kicking team should be spaced evenly and about six paces apart across the field. They should also be arranged by alternating a fast runner with one who runs at a more moderate speed. This results in waves of tacklers and prevents dangerous holes in the advancing barrier. This arrangement is usually obtained by lining up in the regular way, i.e., end, tackle, halfback, guards, etc. The ends and backs are usually the fastest runners while the big linemen do not cover ground so rapidly.

Covering the Kickoff.—The kicking side should run to the receiver as fast as possible, always careful to surround him in a fan-like manner. As a safety measure, one man should stay back for a possible return kick. It may also be desirable to designate a man near each flank to proceed cautiously, avoid being blocked out, and watch for a break up the sidelines. The first wave of tacklers should con-

verge on the ball-carrier, while the second wave fans out and drifts with the ball. This breaks up double-teaming.

Receiving the Kickoff.—There are several rather common methods of returning the kickoff. One method, which is sometimes called

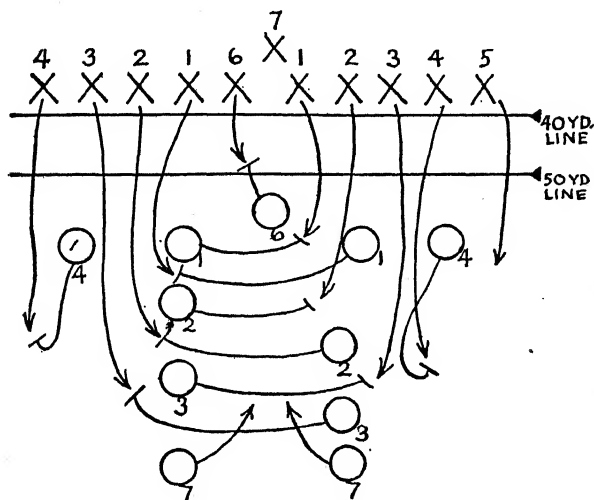


DIAGRAM 1.—The cross-blocking method of returning the kick-off.

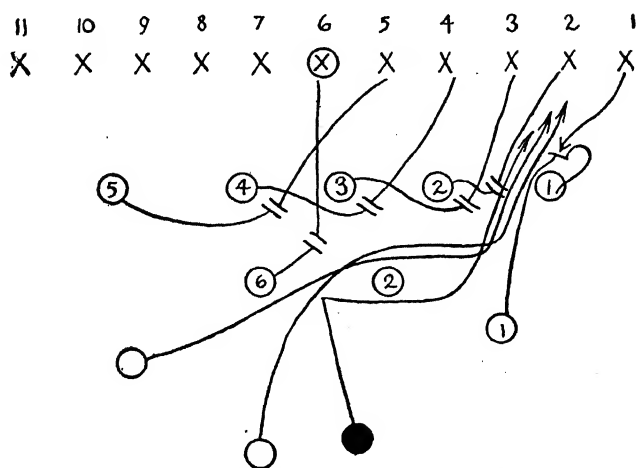


DIAGRAM 2.—Returning the kick-off by concentrating the blocking on one flank.

the wedge, as many interferers as possible form in the shape of a wedge in front of the man with the ball. The latter usually attempts to follow this formation down the middle of the field and finally **break** out into the open.

Other plans involve definite assignments for the members of the receiving team. Some of these are illustrated by diagrams. A definite route is also worked out for the ball-carrier to follow. Frequently, this calls for a start up the middle of the field, a cut-back over to one side line, and a final dash along the side of the field until fortunate enough to break into the open. In the latter type of run the blocking should be concentrated largely on one side of the field. (Diagrams 1 and 2).

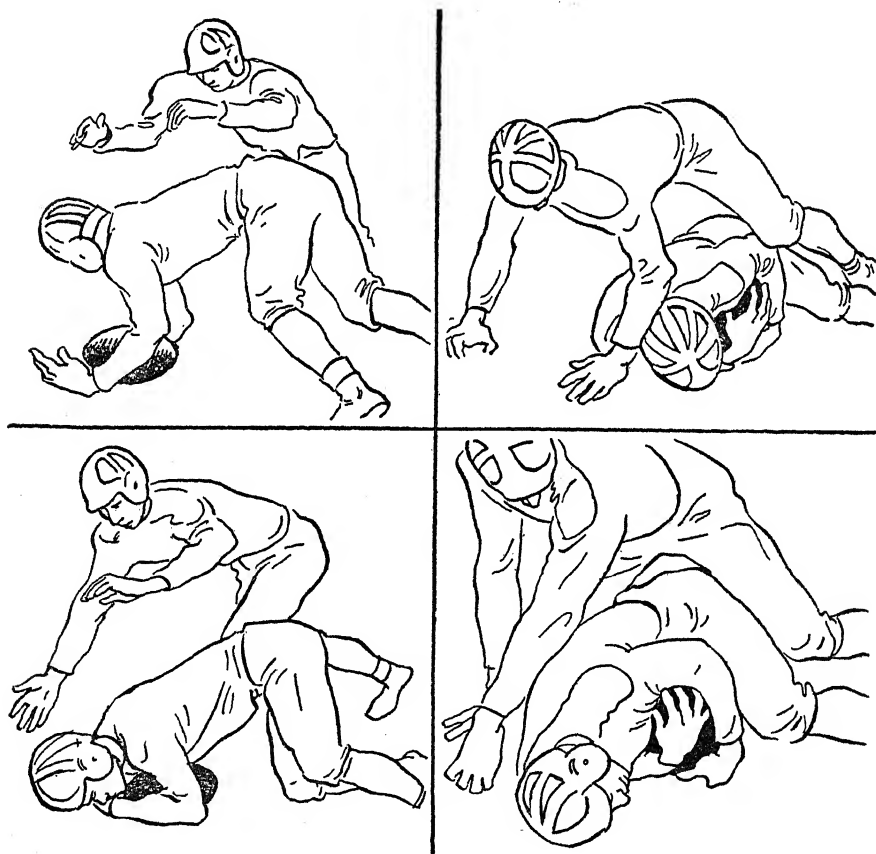


FIG. 9.—Falling on the ball. The player has thrown his body around the ball and between it and the opponent.

Falling on the Ball.—Inability to fall on a loose ball in the proper manner has probably cost many a team an important ball game. This skill should be learned by every football player. This does not mean, however, that coaches and players should resort to the barbarous practice of falling on a rolling ball on hard ground at the

first practice session. Injuries to unconditioned players will often last throughout the season. Practice in falling on the ball should be delayed until all players are well conditioned or it should be done on soft ground. (Figure 9).

The player should leave his feet and execute a low dive for the ball with the body parallel to the ground. The hands and arms should be extended to grasp the ball. At the same time, the body should be thrown around it in a pocket-like manner with the knees drawn up toward the chin. The ball should be pulled in against the stomach. Players should learn to fall on either side with equal facility.

Picking Up the Ball.—If the situation permits running with a loose ball, the player should scoop up the ball with the open hands by dropping the inside knee close to the ball as he dashes by it.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should the ball be gripped, rather than held loosely, in the palm of the hand for forward passing?
2. How should the beginning passer be taught to spiral the ball?
3. What are the fundamental principles involved in forward passing technique and strategy?
4. Explain the various methods to be used by receivers to free themselves for the pass.
5. What are the three methods described for throwing lateral passes?
6. What are the five types of lateral pass plays described in the text?
7. Describe the proper method of carrying a football.
8. How should the ball be shifted from one arm to the other?
9. Explain in detail the technique of place kicking. Drop kicking. What is the holder's position and form?
10. Describe the proper method of protecting the place and drop kicker.
11. Diagram two methods of returning the kickoff.
12. How should the players be spaced and arranged for the kickoff?
13. Describe the grip, stance, step, swing, and follow-through of the punt.
14. How should a team protect its kicker and cover its kicks?

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. Long forward passes should be thrown with a very fast spin on the ball. |
| T | F | 2. The forward passer should use a three-quarter overarm form in throwing a pass. |
| T | F | 3. Forward passers should be taught to grip the ball. |
| T | F | 4. The punter's leg should swing in a side arc. |
| T | F | 5. The right-footed punter steps first with the right foot, then steps with the left foot, and kicks with the right. |

- T F 6. The punter who kicks the ball within 3 seconds after it leaves the center's hands is considered a fast kicker.
- T F 7. The place-kicker should stand at least 10 yards behind the line to make the kick.
- T F 8. Pass receivers should try to receive the ball in the hands.
- T F 9. In carrying the ball, the fingers of the ball-carrier, rather than the palm of his hand, should extend over the point of the ball.
- T F 10. On the kickoff the members of the kicking team should line up about twelve paces apart.

CHAPTER 2

OFFENSIVE LINE PLAY

In the parlance of the football field it is often said that the game is won "up front." This means, and it is almost a football axiom, that the team with the most powerful and best coached line generally wins the game. Efficient offensive line play is based on expert blocking and *blocking is the very essence of offensive football*. Success in this important fundamental, in turn, depends upon sound technique in stance and charge. Well-drilled linemen invariably "beat" their opponents to the charge, and they seldom lose an opportunity to outmaneuver them. They are keen to observe "tell-tale" mannerisms like a slight change of expression or a shifting of weight, which give away in advance the opponent's intentions.

Modern offensive line play has developed tremendously along technical lines and to play it well, requires speed, courage, intelligence and limitless aggressiveness. Above all a boy, who hopes to become a great lineman, should love close body contact.

The Offensive Stance.—A wide offensive stance is essential to good line play. It must be one in which the lineman is comfortable, yet able to charge forward, move backward for interference, or cross-check easily and effectively. All linemen should assume the same stance.

The Three-Point Position.—The most effective position is the "*three-point stance*" with the feet approximately on the same line and with one hand resting on the ground. The weight should not be shifted too far forward on the hand since this causes the lineman to lunge on his forward charge and makes it difficult for him to pull out for line interference. Likewise, the weight should not be shifted too far to the rear or the forward charge will be slowed up greatly. The best stance is the one in which the weight is evenly distributed on the balls of the two feet and the hand. (Figure 12).

An inexperienced lineman should assume the proper stance by first standing erect with his feet approximately two feet apart and his right toe even or slightly to the rear of the back of his left heel. He should then squat and adjust his feet until he is comfortable. Finally, he should place his right hand lightly and comfortably on the ground

in advance of his feet, with the knuckles rather than the fingertips assisting in maintaining proper equilibrium. This not only provides stability, but protects the fingers from injury.

While most of the weight should be on the balls of the feet, the hand should assist in giving balance. The head should be erect, the neck stiff or "bull" neck, the knees as wide as the feet, and the back held in a straight line from the buttocks to the shoulders and at an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. The free arm should be bent with the hand against the chest or the fingers gripping the jersey, since the elbow can be used effectively in cooperation with the shoulder on the charge.

This position is best suited to large linemen. Although the initial charge may not be quite as hard as the charge from the four point position, the lineman using it is less likely to fall to the ground if he fails to get contact with the opponent's leg or body.

The Four-Point Position.—In the four-point position both hands are on the ground, and since the weight is farther forward, they assume a portion of it. This position is well suited to small linemen. The initial charge is more powerful than the charge from the three-point position, but there is danger that the blocker will lose his balance and fall to the ground. (Figure 18).

Common Mistakes.—High school linemen are apt to make the following mistakes: If the feet are too close together, the balance is easily lost in any direction. High hips cause a loss of strength forward and upwards, and a rounded back with the head down has the same bad results. Too much weight on the hands causes the player to go to the ground on the first step of his offensive charge. It not only places the blocker under a strain, but allows the defensive opponent opportunity to pull the offensive lineman forward and out of the play. The head must be up to visualize the position of the opponent, and to see and to duck his straight arm. This will assure gaining contact on his body with real drive.

The Center Stance.—There are two types of center positions: namely, the parallel foot position with the buttocks low, head-up, and most of the weight on the two feet, and the stride position with one foot forward supporting most of the weight; the other back for comfort, with the buttocks and back on the same level with the shoulders. The ball should be placed at arm's length where freedom of movement and efficiency in passing are possible. Obviously, this means no weight be placed on the ball.

Offensive Charging and Blocking.—The offensive lineman should take advantage of his starting signal and “beat” his opponent to the charge with all the power at his command.

Contact should be made by moving the feet in short choppy steps and driving the shoulder into the opponent. The neck should be rigid, the head up, the eyes open, and the buttocks low.

Blocking.—Just as tackling is the most important feature of defensive football, so is blocking the very essence of offensive play. In so far as a team is concerned, good blocking is more important than fine ball-carrying. It is the primary fundamental in any offensive system and there can be no really successful offense without a high type of blocking. Because of its importance and because of the fact that it is one of the hardest and most unnatural skills to master, it should be learned by every boy early in the season. It is natural for a boy to want to *use his hands* when confronted by an opponent, but the rules do not permit the use of hands by the offense. In order to make blocking habitual without illegal use of hands, it is important to practice the skill daily. In the early days of football almost all interfering and blocking were done with the shoulders, and players seldom left their feet, but in recent years the body block has also become quite common.

The average lineman should be content with mastering two fundamental types of blocks for use in his charging and running interference. They are the *shoulder charge or block* and the *cross-body block*. The other blocks which develop from these such as the reverse, knee, hip, cartwheel, combination and other blocks will come naturally after these two fundamental blocks are mastered. (Figure 10).

The Shoulder Block.—The shoulder block is fundamentally a tackle without the use of the arms. It can be used in the line or in running interference, but is used the major part of the time in close line play. The lineman should drive into the opponent from a low position with short digging steps. Lunging should be avoided since it results in loss of balance. The charge should be low, quick, hard, and forward-upward with the head up, hips low, back straight, and eyes on the center of the opponent's torso to see any trick defensive moves. The head should be thrust to the side opposite the direction the opponent is to be blocked, and contact should be made on him with the shoulder, neck and bent arm. If the charge is to be sustained, the feet must be well spread and the steps must be short. (Figure 10).

The straight-arm of the opponent may be broken by throwing it

off with the nearest bent forearm. Or it may be necessary to duck under his hands and come up from underneath for contact. The head, body, and feet, therefore, should be under control at all times to enable the blocker to drive under and up, or to the right or left depending upon the actions of the opponent.

The Cross-Body Block.—The cross-body block may be executed from a position in the line or while running interference. It is often called the *open-field block* when applied in the open. The blocker should run hard but not too low. He should drive almost "through" his opponent before he drops his shoulder, and throws his body above

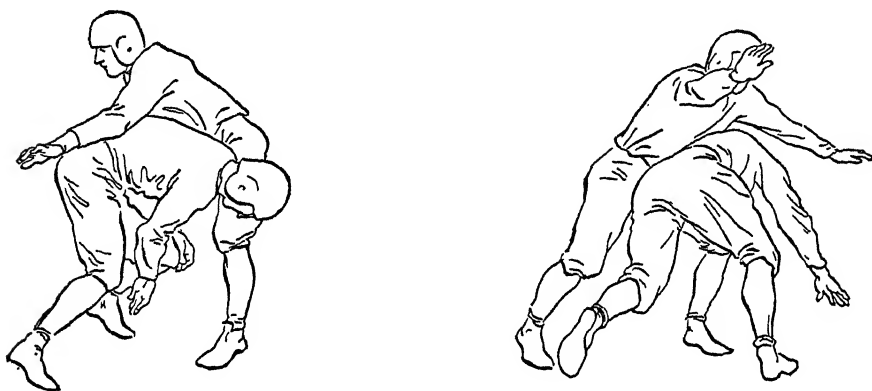


FIG. 10.—The shoulder block (left) and cross-body block (right). After ducking the opponent's arm and hand the blocker on the left should lower his hips and raise his head as he gains contact.

the knees and across the thighs of his opponent. If the opponent retreats, the blocker should keep contact by following up with a crab-like motion. The blocker should avoid such common mistakes as leaving the feet too soon, hesitating before making contact, and making the contact too low. (Figure 10).

Other Blocks.—Other blocks, commonly called by such names as Indian Block, Dive and Roll Block, Cartwheel Block, Check Block, and Reverse Body Block are really variations or combinations of the shoulder and cross-body blocks. (Figure 10).

Team Work in Blocking.—Much of the charging and blocking of linemen is done in pairs. Usually one acts as pivot post by making contact with the opponent and holding ground, while his teammate charges the opponent back and around the post and away from the play. (Figure 12).



"Pic" (FPG)

THE PUNT (Luckman): Note the position of the hands on the ball and the first step forward with the right foot.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE PUNT (Luckman): The kicker has stepped forward with the left foot, and the ball has been dropped with both hands leaving it simultaneously.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE PUNT (Luckman): The right toe is pointed so the instep strikes the belly of the ball.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE PUNT (Luckman): The complete follow-through which carries the punter off the ground.

Line Interference.—The ability to pull out of the line and run interference is one of the most difficult skills the lineman is called upon to perform and in the modern game every man on the line must block for the ball-carrier at one time or another.

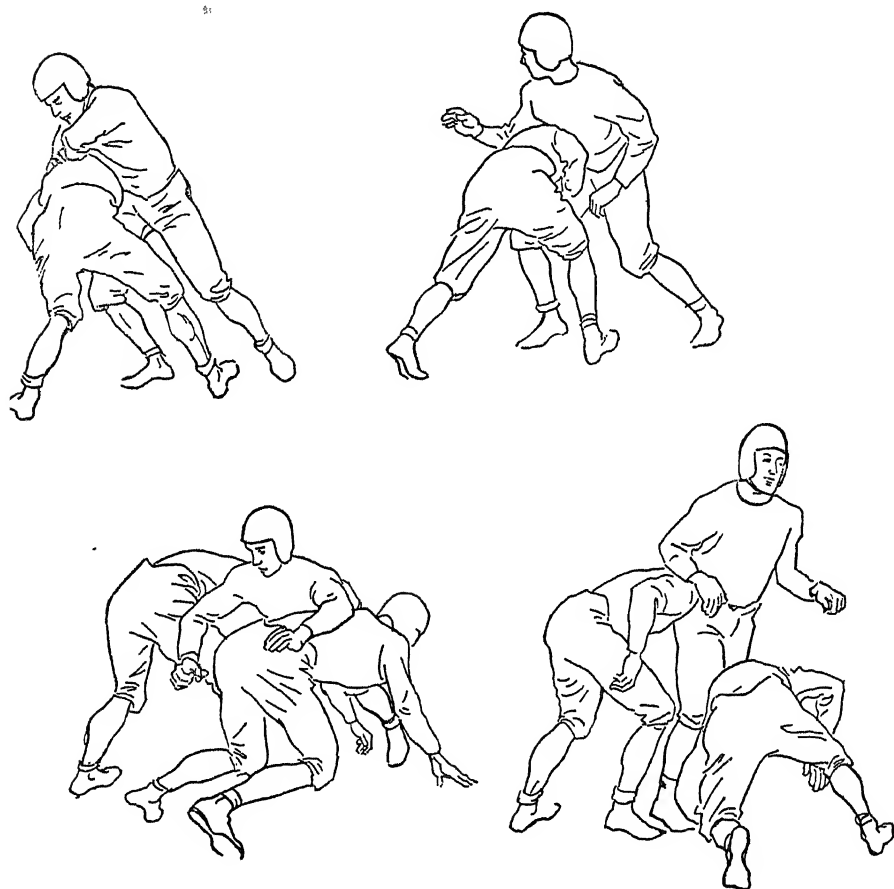


FIG. 11.—The knee and leg block (upper left), the shoulder block (upper right) and double-teaming (below). Note the high-low block on the lower right.

It is imperative that linemen learn to pull out quickly and get into position to block and clear rather than clutter the way. The start is unnatural and much time will be consumed in executing it unless the rhythm is fully mastered by daily practice. There are two ways of pulling out for line interference, known as the cross-over method and the near-foot method.

The Cross-Over Method.—In the first method, as the ball is

snapped, the player pivots on the near foot, i.e., the foot on the side in the direction he plans to go. At the same time, he steps over and

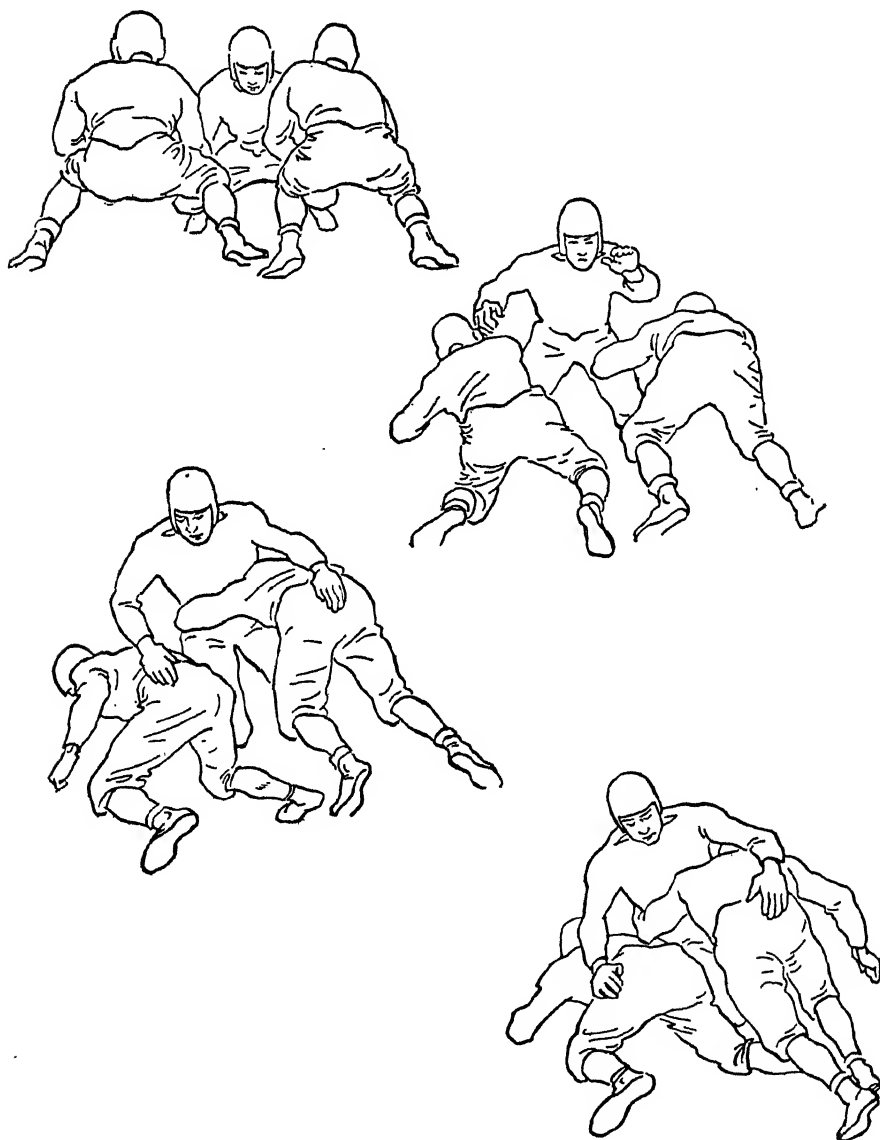


FIG. 12.—Team work in blocking by two offensive linemen.

across with the other or far foot and pushes off with his hands. He should swing the arms vigorously and run low with short driving steps.

The Near-Foot Method.—In the second method, as the ball is snapped, the player takes a short step back and out toward the play with his outside foot, i.e., the foot on the side in the direction of the play. He then pivots on this foot and at the same time steps over

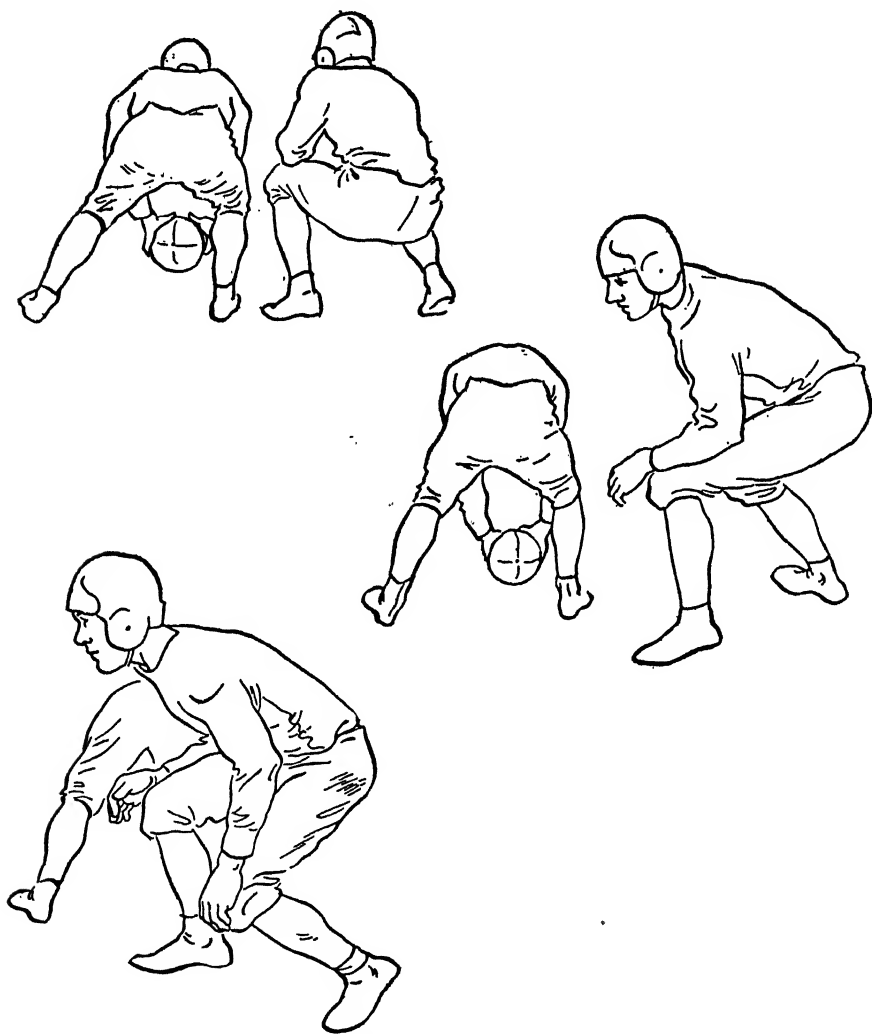


FIG. 13.—The guard pulls out of the line to run interference.

and across with the other or far foot. He, too, should speed up his "get-away" by a vigorous push-off with the hands. The lineman should *avoid* stepping *straight back* as this wastes a half or full stride in getting ahead of the play and is a common cause of the failure of

running plays. Again it should be stated that the step is back *and out* toward the play. (Figure 13).

The lineman should be careful in assuming his stance so that he does not give away his intentions. He should point straight ahead with his eyes forward and he should avoid any leaning or change of facial expression.

As he pulls out of the line, he should be alert for any opponent who may have sliced through. He should start low, hard and fast and turn sharply toward the defense by pushing off the outside foot. As he runs he should charge anyone blocking his pathway to his assigned opponent.

Blocking on Kicks.—Since the punt is said to be the most important single play in football, it is imperative that each member of the team do his full share in its successful execution. This is certainly true of the linemen. They must first protect the kicker and then get down field to cover the kick. They should never neglect the former, however, and permit a defensive man to break through, in their eagerness to do the latter.

With the opposing defensive center playing out of the line one of the five offensive linemen, in addition to the ends, may go down field as soon as the ball is snapped, but all linemen should clearly understand which man it is to be. The offensive linemen should be constantly alert on punts for the situation in which one or both of the backers-up, the fullback and center, sneak into the line making it a seven or eight man defensive alignment. In meeting this maneuver the five center linemen and, on certain occasions, the ends, should remain intact and block as a unit. (Diagram 66).

The technique for blocking on kicks should be thoroughly understood by every lineman. *The lineman should not leave his position to block for kicks.* If he moves forward or to the side, the results will be fatal. He should remain stationary, but in a semi-crouched and alert position, until his opponent "shows" or "commits himself" and indicates his intentions and the direction of his charge. Guards and tackles should be wedged or braced toward the center with feet braced and elbows lifted and spread. That is, they should protect the *inside*, since the shortest path to block the kick is through the center of the line. The opponents should be forced to go *outside and around the flanks*, since the distance is greater and the kick will be made before they can interfere. Moreover, by forcing them outside additional backfield blocking can be easily applied.

The lineman's task is not finished after the kick has been success-

fully made. The ends should rush down field and tackle the punter or force him up the middle of the field toward the five center linemen. The latter should dash down field in a fan-like formation and at top speed the moment they hear the kicker's foot meet the ball. One of the surest signs of poor coaching and careless playing is that of the lineman, who stands and stares skyward at the ball after it has been kicked. There is no place on a football team for a "daisy-picker." (Diagram 69).

In addition to their duties in charging, running interference, and protecting the kicker the linemen are also called upon to block for the passer.

Blocking For Passes.—Since the success of a passing attack depends largely upon the amount of time which the passer is permitted in spotting his receiver, it is highly important that he receive the greatest possible protection. This is one of the primary functions of the line. There are at least two methods of pulling-out employed by the guards and tackles. (Diagrams 45 to 49; also 59 and 60).

On or Close to the Line of Scrimmage.—One method, although not commonly used, is very effective under certain conditions. If the opponent is a fast charger and not more than two spaces removed from the blocker, the latter can employ an effective shoulder charge or cross-body block at or near the line of scrimmage.

Behind the Line of Scrimmage.—In the other and more common method the blocking lineman fades back several yards behind the line and meets an incoming opponent from the inside. Ordinarily, he should employ a cross-body block or force his adversary beyond or to the outside of the passer. (Diagrams 45 to 49; also 59 and 60).

The players, who remain on the line, should wait for the opponents to "commit" themselves, and then actively block them out. Since it is not necessary to move them, a cross-body or shoulder block should keep them out of the play.

Offensive Play of the Center.—The center probably influences the offensive play of the team more than any other individual on the team. The attack revolves around his position since he starts every play by passing the ball. If he passes badly, the play is adversely affected and is almost certain to fail. Faulty center passing, more than any other single factor, will cause confusion and uncertainty in the backfield and the ball-carrier will surely be slow, hesitant, and vacillating in his start.

The first duty of the center, therefore, is to pass the ball accurately.

The Center Pass.—The center should assume one of the positions described at the beginning of the chapter. The ball must be flat on the ground with its long axis parallel to the side lines. If the center is right-handed, he should grip the ball for the spiral pass with the right hand much as he would for a forward pass. This would place the right hand to the front and right side of the ball. It should be rotated to the right and under as the ball is placed in position to pass. The spiral pass is, in reality, an underhand forward pass. The left

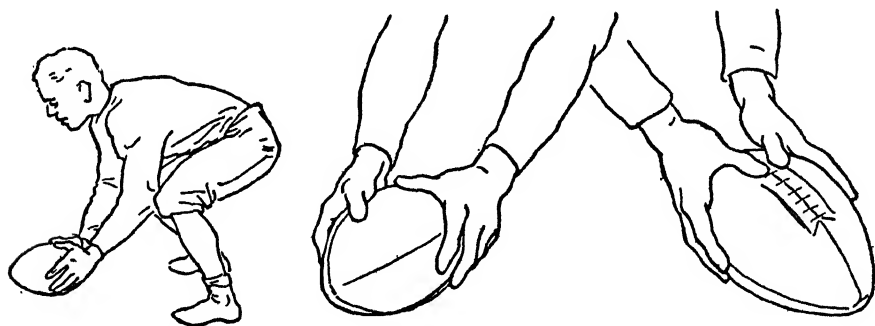


FIG. 14.—The center stance and two methods of gripping the ball for the center pass. The grip for the spiral pass (center) and the end-over-end pass (right).

hand should be placed on the left and somewhat toward the rear of the ball and is used merely in guiding the ball.

Types of Passes.—The center must be able to make several types of passes of varying speed and distance. The punter requires a very fast pass directly at him and about ten yards in length. The half-back, on an off-tackle play, should be given a pass of medium speed of four and one-half to six yards in length which “leads” the receiver slightly. On line plunges the pass should be “lobbed” or “floated” or “hung in the air” two or three yards behind the line of scrimmage where the plunger can pick it out of the air. On spinner plays the pass is of medium distance and must be faster and directly at the receiving back. (Figure 14).

The Center Charge.—After the pass has been accurately made the center should block like any other lineman. He should immediately spread his elbows and raise his bent arms to the level of his shoulders and charge or block as the play indicates. By watching the feet of his opponent he may learn his intentions in advance. If single blocking he should try to contact him on or behind the line of scrimmage, particularly if checking away from the play. If double-teaming, his assisting teammate should act as the blocking post,

while he does the turning of the opponent away from the play (Figure 15).

Offensive Play of the Ends.—In no department of football has more progress been made than in the technique of end play. Few

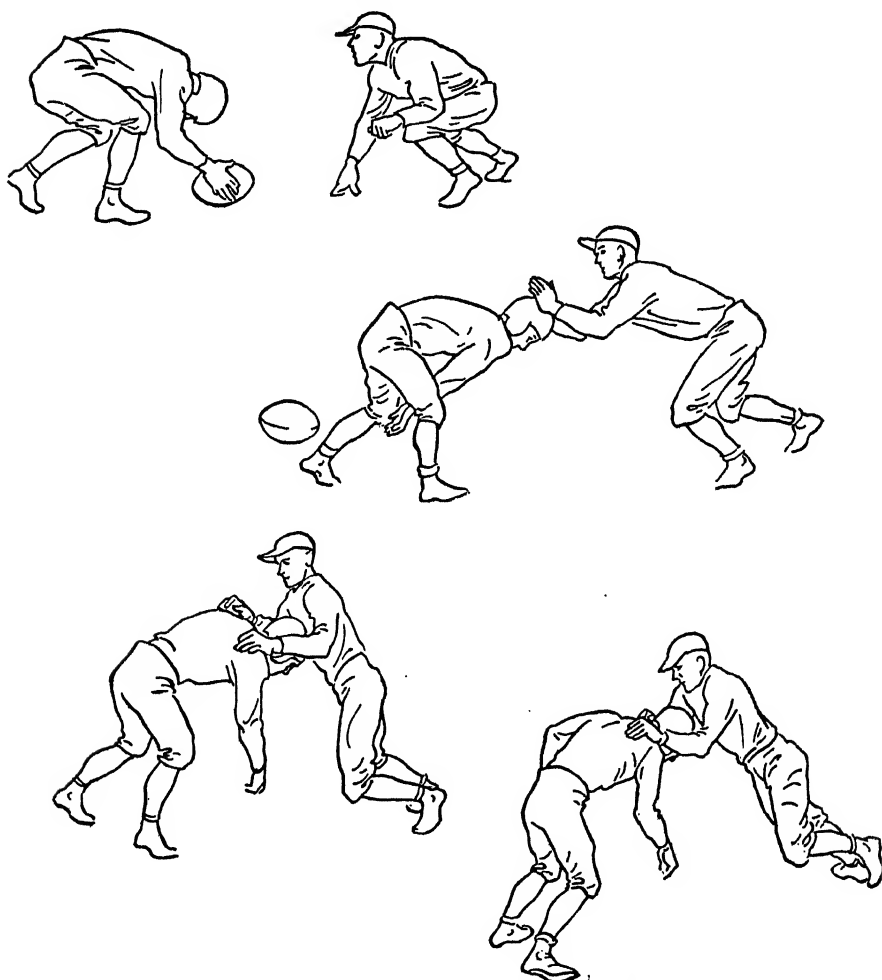


FIG. 15.—The center pass and charge.

men have all the qualifications necessary to be the ideal end, since they must be rugged enough to “box” the defensive tackles, tall and supple enough to catch passes, and fast enough to cover kicks and elude the pass defenders.

Blocking the Tackles.—The strong side end should be an exceptional blocker and adept at “double-teaming” with a teammate. The

short side end should be an expert single blocker. Both should excel at "boxing" the tackle. Each should assume a square stance in which he is prepared to meet every defensive maneuver of the opposition. He should be a force with which the tackles must reckon rather than a "push-over" that can be forgotten for the duration of the game. Each should be prepared to duck a straight-arm, meet a side step, or block a fast charge. In ducking the hands of the tackle, he should use a *dip* charge and come up from underneath. In meeting a side step he should slide laterally with the opposing tackle and apply the block on the line of scrimmage. Against a fast charging tackle he should block the opponent as he goes past. The tackle who tries to overpower him should be beaten to the charge. (Figure 16).

Receiving Passes.—In addition to the ability to block the tackle the end must be clever enough to break past him and across the line of scrimmage for a pass. A skillful end frequently feints to block the tackle first. He should then plan to deceive the defensive halfback by a right-left or left-right feint, i.e., by some mannerism he should make it appear that he is going to break to the right but then should suddenly cut to the left and vice versa. He should also use a change-of-pace to get past his defender. He should never loaf even if he is only a decoy. Moreover, he should make a desperate attempt to get to every pass regardless of how badly it is thrown since there is a possibility of interception as long as it is in the air. If the ball is intercepted, he should always be prepared to make a tackle.

Covering Punts.—On all punts the end must race down field with the snap of the ball and tackle the receiver or turn him in to the other linemen. He should avoid the defensive back assigned to take him out. This may be done by the use of hands, by feinting right-left or left-right, or by a change-of-pace. As soon as he hears the thud of the foot on the ball he should take a quick glance at the ball to determine its course. He must be careful, however, for the defensive back will probably attempt to block him just as he looks back. He should concentrate on getting down the field and on tackling the receiver. He cannot afford to be delayed or to permit his attention to be diverted by his opponent. While ends must tackle with some boldness and abandon they must exercise great care to avoid running past their man.



FIG. 16.—The reverse body block. The blocker feints to block with the right side of his body but suddenly throws his head to the right and blocks with the left side. Used frequently by the end in blocking the tackle.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by the statement "the game was won up front"?
2. Describe in detail the stance of an offensive lineman.
3. Name and describe the two fundamental blocks in football.
4. Describe the two common methods linemen use in pulling out of the line and into the interference.
5. Explain the duties of each lineman in blocking on kicks.
6. Discuss the statement "The lineman should not leave his position to block for kicks."
7. Explain two methods of blocking for passes. Which one should high school players use?
8. What are the various types of passes the center must master?
9. In what way does the center "probably influence the offensive play of the team more than any other individual on the team"?
10. What qualifications should one look for in the ideal offensive end?

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| T F | 1. All linemen should assume the same stance. |
| T F | 2. In the three-point offensive line position both hands of the lineman are on the ground. |
| T F | 3. The two most fundamental blocks in football are the shoulder block and the cross-body block. |
| T F | 4. The text mentions two methods of teaching linemen to pull out into the interference; the cross-over method and the feet-parallel method. |
| T F | 5. One lineman, in addition to the two ends, should go down field on a punt play, as soon as the ball is snapped. |
| T F | 6. The linemen should not leave their positions to block for kicks. |
| T F | 7. The spiral center pass is really an underhand forward pass. |
| T F | 8. After the center pass has been made the center should block like any other lineman. |
| T F | 9. The decoy on a forward pass should run approximately half speed to his designated spot. |
| T F | 10. The end should watch the punted ball out of the corner of his eyes as he runs down the field to tackle the receiver. |

CHAPTER 3

DEFENSIVE LINE PLAY

It was stated in a previous chapter that the game is frequently won "up front." Similarly, it could be said that the game is saved "up front." Moreover, while blocking is the basis of the offense, so is tackling the basis of the defense.

Tackling Technique.—Tackling is the very essence of defense. No young player should hope to be placed on a team unless he has become adept at this most important fundamental. A good tackling team will never be beaten badly. The spirit and fierceness of the tackle is probably as important as proper form. The player who is eager to gain contact and who thrills in making a clean, hard tackle will easily learn the correct form. The manner of making the tackle will depend largely upon the relative position of the man with the ball. There are at least three types of tackles: the front, or head-on tackle; the side, or cross tackle; and the tackle from behind.

The Straight-on Tackle.—The first type to learn is the straight-on tackle. Here a defensive player should attempt to get the runner as soon as possible. He should keep the body balanced with the weight low. The shoulders must gain contact by being lowered under the runner's straight-arm. This straight-arm can be met with a straight, low back and a terrific leg drive. The feet should be rather wide apart, and as the shoulder strikes, the tackler should finish with a hard drive. As the tackler charges toward the runner, he should carry his arms forward at the last moment, and eye the spot to be tackled. The point for shoulder contact is on the leg and slightly above the knees. As the arms are spread, they should be thrown around the runner's legs at the knees, or slightly below them. As the shoulders drive the opponent's upper leg and body backward, the arms should squeeze the knees of the opponent together and pull the lower legs forward. These two opposing forces will cause the runner to lose his balance and fall backward. Some coaches teach the tackler to drive his head straight into the opponent. In another method which is the most widely used, the tackler is taught to drive the shoulder into the opponent with the head on one side. The tackler should run or carry the opponent backward, throw him on his back, and fall directly on him. Tackles should

be made with the top and back of the shoulders, not the front. Tacklers who use the front of the shoulders have no drive.

In making this front tackle, the tackler must anticipate a sudden change of direction by the ball-carrier and must not get caught off balance. *The tackler should feint his intentions* just as the runner does.

The Tackle from the Side.—The cross or side tackle may be made by running into the opponent or by leaving the feet. The tackler also may be taught to drive into the ball-carrier's legs or throw the body across his path. (Figure 17).

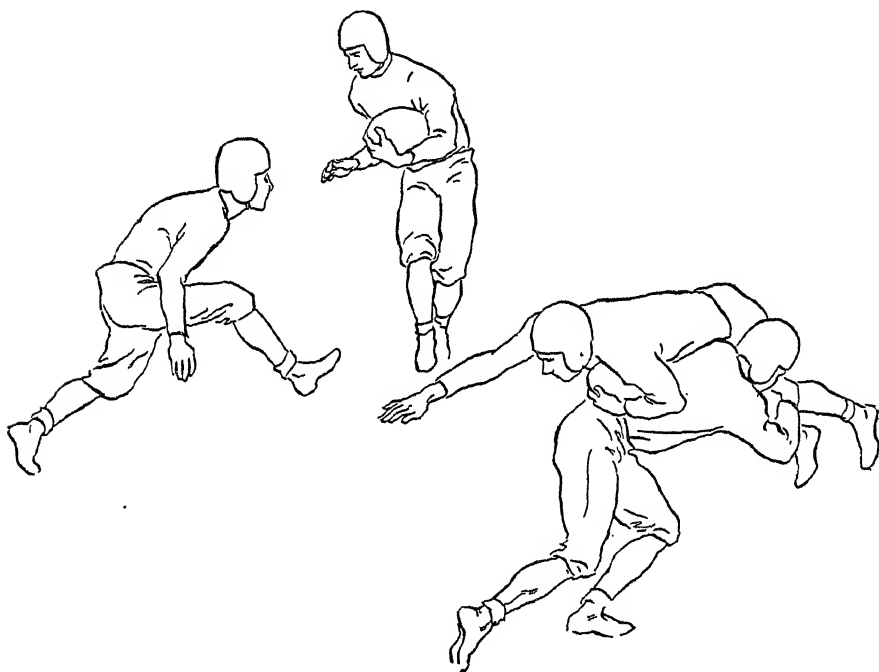


FIG. 17.—Tackling from the side. Note how the tackler runs or drives into the ball-carrier with head up, back straight, and hips low.

In the one method the tackler should keep his feet and drive into the near leg of the opponent. This action knocks the legs from under the man with the ball who falls forward in the arms of the tackler. In another method the tackler should leave his feet and shoot his head, neck, and shoulders across and in front of the runner a little farther than appears necessary. The runner's legs should be grasped and pulled together. As the tackler turns his shoulders toward the ball-carrier, he should grasp the opponent's outside leg or knee. The knees

should be pulled together and held firmly against the tackler's breast. This causes the runner to lose his balance, hence the tackle is nearly always completed with a roll. To do this, the player should drop the shoulder nearest the ground, and fall under the opponent. When the roll is completed, the tackler will be on top.

In tackling from the side the head should not be permitted to slide behind the ball-carrier. The latter can easily push the tackler's head into the ground and break away from this one-handed type of tackle. Boys should practice this tackle from both sides.

The Tackle from Behind.—This tackle requires courage, accurate judgment of speed and distance, and a terrific leg drive. The tackler should aim high, leap off both feet, attempt to grasp the opponent around the neck, and pull him to the ground. If the distance has been misjudged, and the tackler is too far away to hit high, he may still tackle around the legs or grasp a foot in a last desperate effort to bring the ball-carrier down.

Above everything else in tackling, *the eyes should be open*. There is no place for a blind man on a football field.

Individual Stunts on Defense.—While tackling is the most important defensive fundamental in football, it cannot be performed unless the defensive player can fight his way to the ball-carrier. In order to do this successfully, he must learn a variety of subtle methods of evading or eliminating the offensive opponents who block his path. These are commonly called individual stunts.

Defensive Stunts of the Guard.—While the guards assume a more or less unheralded role, they play a very important part in the work of the defensive line. (Figure 18).

The guard may assume a low stance with both hands on the ground (four-point position), or he may take a more upright semi-crouch position (three-point) with one hand on the ground and the other hand on the knee. Almost without exception the guard should drive across the line to control the neutral zone and protect his territory immediately in front. He should not always drive through to the offensive backfield, however, on all plays as he is usually the target for many of the attacking team's "mouse-trap" plays. If he meets no opposition on his charge, it is a pretty sure sign that he is being inveigled into a "trap." He should immediately stop and drop down on both hands and feet and protect his territory. Above all he should avoid being driven out of position. In modern football the defensive linemen are being "mouse-trapped" *from the outside* as well as the inside so the guard should be alert for blockers from either direction. Occasionally,

he will use his hands on his opponent, hold his position, and then attempt to get to the play.

All beginning linemen should be impressed with the fact that they should charge or play but one opponent at a time. It is folly to try to overpower two good offensive linemen. On the other hand, he should play one or the other, or one, then the other with quick, cat-like charges, using various methods of breaking through.

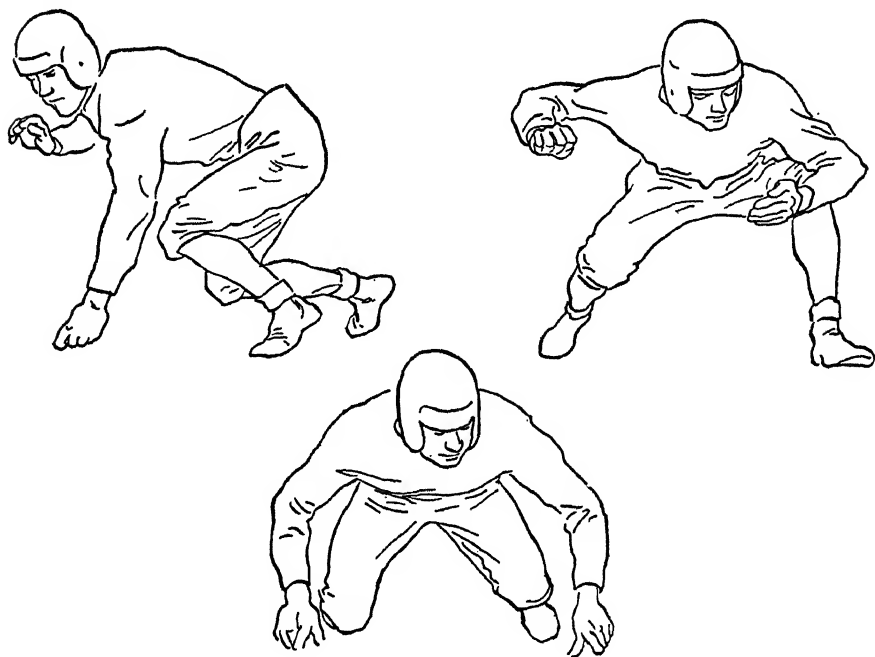


FIG. 18.—Three defensive positions for linemen: four-point, with both hands on the ground (lower); three-point, with one hand on the ground (upper left); and the semi-crouch (upper right).

The Shoulder Charge.—One of the most frequently used weapons of the defensive guard is the straight shoulder charge. This maneuver should be launched from a low position, and contact is made with the shoulder somewhere below the shoulders of the opponent. The drive is made off the leg on the side of the shoulder employed, i.e., if the guard blocks with his right shoulder, he should drive off his right leg. Elbows and hands should be used to add force to the drive in attempting to lift the opponent and move him upward and backward. The success of this defensive movement depends largely upon "beating" the

opponent to the charge. It should be varied, however, with other stunts, including the *dip or submarine charge*.

The Dip or Submarine Charge.—The dip or submarine charge, sometimes called the down-and-up charge, is a dive under the inside knees of the two opposing linemen. The guard should land with his chest and hands on the ground. The elbows should be held near the body and the hands should be near his head to assist in pulling him through the opening. It is important that the legs be pulled up under him immediately and this, in turn, should be followed by a *quick push-up with the hands*. *The guard must not forget to push-up*. If he fails to come up or if he does not succeed in drawing his legs under his body, the opponents will fall on him and keep him out of the play. If he comes up and fights his way through, he is in excellent position to make a tackle. If he fails to get through, he has at least closed the hole and has prevented any gain over his territory. The dive is usually more effective than the shoulder charge which attempts to split the offensive line. This stratagem, however, should be varied with its counterpart, known as the “hop-over” or “over-the-top.”

Over-the-Top.—An excellent stunt to use as an occasional alternate to the dip is the “hop-over” or the dive “over-the-top.” After several submarine charges by the defensive guard the offensive linemen are likely to be charging very low. This situation presents an excellent opportunity for the guard to hop or dive over these two opponents and into their backfield. A crafty lineman, at times, may feint to go low and then dive over the top. Again he may stand high and feint to charge high but suddenly dive underneath. Or he may feint high or low and actually charge where he feints. This kind of defensive stratagem will keep the attacking team guessing. In addition to the stunts described above, the versatile player will need other methods of defending his position.

The Double-Coördination Charge.—The double-coördination or split charge is used to fight through between two opponents. The first movement consists of a powerful drive of both hands against the shoulder or body of one opponent, usually the man toward the outside of the line. The second movement, which follows immediately and with cat-like swiftness, consists of sliding the knee on the opposite side, along the ground and into the inside man or between the two opponents. This is usually the inside knee, i.e., the one toward the center of the line. Simultaneously, the defensive man's back should be turned toward the inside man and the elbows and arms should be used to split apart the two offensive men. The outside player should be pushed

with the hands while bracing the back against the other man on the inside. The push with the hands should dispose of the first man, the knee, elbows, and back should dispose of the second. Meanwhile, the opposite leg should be drawn up and the guard should fight his way through by pulling on the hips of his opponents. This maneuver should leave him in excellent position to tackle the man with the ball.

What to Do When "Caught" or Blocked Out.—There are other stunts which the guard might use, but the boy who tries to learn too many will probably find himself master of none. Every defensive guard, however, should know what to do when "caught" or blocked out by the offense. He may be able to make a complete pivot back, around, and toward the play. Or as a last resort, he can drop to the ground in front of his opponents with his body parallel to the line of scrimmage. This latter stratagem is especially effective against line bucks.

Defensive Stunts of the Tackles.—While the shoulder charge, the submarine charge, and the split charge are described for the guard, they may also be used, with other stunts, by the tackle. The latter may play low in a three-point position or stand in a crouch. Which foot is back will depend upon the number of opponents confronting him and which one he meets first. He should meet an adversary in a fighter's position with the near foot advanced and the far foot back. From either stance he should charge low and drive into his opponent with a shoulder charge or a dip charge. A variation of these two methods of defense is a split-dip charge through the opening between his opponents. It is effective because the men opposing him are compelled to try to block him at an angle. The double-coordination charge may be used against a skilled combination of end and halfback. All charges must be executed with great speed and force and without "telegraphing" the intended movement in advance.

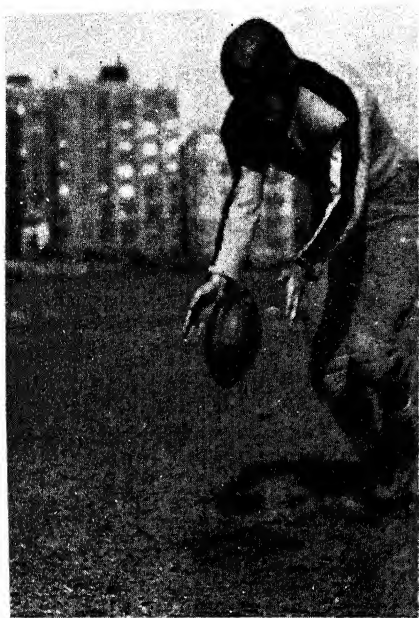
The In-and-out, Out-and-in Charge.—In addition to the stunts described above the defensive tackle may line up close to the offensive end and employ an *in-and-out* or an *out-and-in* charge. If he expected a play to the outside, he should use one or both hands on the end, then turn quickly and drive into the wing-back. This is the *in-and-out* charge. He should not be delayed by either opponent. On the contrary, he should hit one a sudden jolt, then the other, in rapid succession and fight his way almost savagely past them into the opposing backfield.

If he anticipates a play to the inside, he should play closer to the



Keystone (PPG)

PROTECTING THE KICKER: Two backs are shown blocking for the kicker. Note the form of the man with his head toward the camera.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE DROP KICK (Luckman): The drop kicker has held the ball with the middle fingers extending along the seams on either side. As the ball is dropped, point down, both hands are taken from it simultaneously.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE DROP KICK (Luckman): A perfect drop on the point of the ball.

THE DROP KICK (Luckman): The toe is about to meet the ball almost immediately after it rebounds from the ground.

"Pic" (FPG)

THE DROP KICK (Luckman): Note how the head is kept down in the follow-through. This kicker has avoided the common tendency to look up too soon.

"Pic" (FPG)



wing-back and charge into the end. This is the *out-and-in* charge. Mastery of this as well as the others described above should help make the tackle a versatile player.

Defensive Stunts of the Ends.—The end, like the other linemen, should master several defensive stunts, if he hopes to be versatile enough to stop the plays directed at him.

Since there is no opponent immediately confronting him, the defensive end may stand, crouch, or play low. He has several choices. He may crash directly into the interference with his shoulders or body, he may crash and use his hands, he may take two or three steps and crash with his shoulders and body, or he may take the same number of steps and use his hands.

The Crash or Smash.—From a low or crouched stance the end can drive across the line of scrimmage at an angle of 45 degrees and crash into the interferers by the use of a shoulder charge, by throwing the body across in front of them, or by tackling them. Or he may even succeed occasionally in splitting the interferers or in submarining under or between them.

The Crash and Use of Hands.—As a variation the end should crash and as soon as he makes contact he should straight-arm the interferers and shift to the right and left in an attempt to fight his way past them to the ball-carrier.

The Step-Over and Crash.—In this maneuver the end steps across the line of scrimmage two or three paces and then crashes into the interference as the play develops.

The Step-Over and Use of Hands.—This is a variation of the *step-over and crash*. The end steps across but instead of crashing he tries to fight past the interference by using his hands. He should shift right or left, or even retreat with the play to get to the man with the ball. The versatile end varies his methods to keep the interferers guessing as to what he will do.

Defensive Play of the Center.—Although the center frequently plays behind the line on defense as a back, he is also called upon many times in a game to play in the line like any other lineman. When in the line, he too must vary his play. When expecting a buck he should play low and charge as a guard. On plays to the outside he should straight-arm his opponent and hold his position. Rarely should he attempt to drive into the opposing backfield. Above all he must play “mentally loose” and be ready to go back quickly on passes. He should have the qualifications and skills of a lineman, a backer-up, and a halfback.

Position Play of Linemen on a Seven-Man Defensive Line.—The modern lineman must know the individual duties of his positions on every possible size and type of defensive line and in co-operation with a variety of defensive backfield formations. He should first learn his position and duties as a member of a seven-man line.

End Play on a Seven-Man Line.—The end on a seven-man line is responsible for the outside, and he should be sure that no play gets around him. He should not crash, therefore, at an angle of 45 degrees, and he should not go in too far, unless the tackle drifts to the outside and covers his territory while he crashes. He should cross the line of scrimmage, hold his ground, and turn the play in to his teammates or make the tackle himself. He should also rush the passer but always with the thought in mind that he must protect the outside even at the expense of some delay in rushing the passer.

Tackle Play on a Seven-Man Line.—The tackle on the strong side should play outside the offensive end and drive into the end or wing-back according to the situation. He should drive in and attempt to clear the interference on wide plays so his teammate on the end can make the tackle. On pass plays he has an excellent opportunity to knock potential receivers off balance and delay them long enough to seriously interfere with the timing of the pass.

Above all else, he should rush the passer and tackle him with the ball, if possible.

The short side tackle should play a safer game than his teammate on the other side of the line. If there is no wing-back on his side, he should ordinarily play directly in front of the end. He should be especially alert for bucks and reverses over his territory. He may either rush the pass or drop back and protect the flat territory to his outside.

Guard Play on a Seven-Man Line.—If opposing an unbalanced line the strong side defensive guard should play opposite or slightly to the outside of the offensive tackle. His first duty is to protect his territory against all line plays over his side of the line. He should tackle the first back through the line, especially on pass plays. Against a balanced line he should play opposite or slightly outside of the tackle, or the second man over from center.

The short side guard should play opposite the strong guard or between him and the inside offensive tackle. His duties are similar to those of the other guard. Against a balanced line he should play opposite or slightly to the inside of the tackle.

Center Play on a Seven-Man Line.—Against an unbalanced line the center should play to the short side and opposite the short side offensive

guard or between him and the center. He should station himself opposite the center against a balanced line. It is good strategy for the center to line up behind the line and jump into his defensive position in the line just before the ball is snapped, or line up in the line and fade back with the play. Such maneuvering will keep the attack guessing.

Position Play of Linemen on a Six-Man Defensive Line.

—While each lineman must know his duties as a member of a seven-man line it is even more imperative that he learn his assignments on a six-man line.

End Play on a Six-Man Line.—In contrast to his duties on a seven-man line the end on a six-man line is not responsible for the outside. On the strong side he should line up about two yards outside his own tackle and crash into the backfield with abandon. He should attempt to strip the ball-carrier of all interferers. The end on the short side should be especially alert for reverses. Both men should rush the passer and the punter.

Tackle Play on a Six-Man Line.—The tackle on the strong side should station himself between the wing-back and the end. The short side tackle should line up opposite the end, unless there is also a wing-back on his side. In this case, he plays like his teammate. They should charge the end or back, or one then the other, and keep constantly alert for running plays directed over their territory and for passes and kicks.

Guard Play on a Six-Man Line.—The guards generally play directly opposite their offensive opponents on this formation. The strong side guard should be opposite or just outside the inside offensive tackle while the short side guard should line up opposite the center or slightly to his strong side. The duties of the guards are the same here as they are on a seven-man line.

Position Play of Lineman on a Five-Man Line.—The members of a five-man line should be picked for their ability to adapt themselves to any situation regardless of their position.

The two outside men, or ends, should line up outside the wing-backs and play a crashing game.

The tackles play opposite the inside shoulder of their respective offensive ends. Their charge should be directed toward the man to the inside to reenforce their own defensive center-guard. They are responsible for their own territory.

The center-guard should station himself directly opposite the center of the strength of the offensive formation. This will be opposite or

slightly to the strong side of the center against a balanced line and opposite or slightly to the strong side of the offensive guard on the strong side against an unbalanced formation. He should play as a guard and protect his territory.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the technique of executing the straight-on tackle? The side tackle? The tackle from behind?
2. Explain the methods of executing the various stunts of a defensive guard, i.e., the shoulder charge, the submarine charge, the double-coordination, etc. How many should be taught the high school lineman?
3. What should a lineman do when "caught" or blocked out of a play?
4. Describe the in-and-out, out-and-in charge of a defensive tackle.
5. Explain several methods of defensive end play.
6. How does the play of the defensive end on a six-man line differ from his play on a seven-man line?
7. Is the play of the defensive tackle any different on a six- and seven-man line? Does the guard play vary any?
8. Explain the position and duties of the five defensive linemen on a five-man line.

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | 1. A defensive guard should not attempt to charge "over the top" of his opponents. |
| T | F | 2. The dip or submarine charge of a defensive guard is illegal. |
| T | F | 3. The double-coordination charge of the defensive guard is best adapted to large strong linemen. |
| T | F | 4. Defensive ends should rush the kicker and the passer. |
| T | F | 5. The defensive center should not attempt to drive through into the opponent's backfield. |
| T | F | 6. The defensive ends on a six-man line should attempt to strip the ball-carrier of all interferers. |
| T | F | 7. The defensive end on a seven-man line is responsible for the territory outside. |
| T | F | 8. Defensive tackles on a six-man line should not attempt to delay potential pass receivers. |
| T | F | 9. The duties of the defensive guards on a six-man line are quite similar to the duties of the defensive guards on a seven-man line. |
| T | F | 10. The center-guard on a five-man line should play as a guard and protect his territory directly opposite the center of the strength of the offensive formation. |

CHAPTER 4

COORDINATING THE DEFENSIVE LINE

Obviously it is almost useless to teach linemen individual defensive techniques unless these are coordinated into a single defensive unit. Individual skill is needlessly wasted unless each lineman knows exactly how his teammates beside him are charging, and how his close secondary supporters are backing him up.

The Evolution of Defensive Line Play.—In the early days of intercollegiate football in America there were two conflicting views regarding defensive team play in the line. One style of line play was known as the out-charging system; the other was called the in-charging system.

The Out-Charging System.—The *out-charging* system was advocated by coaches who believed the linemen should play rather high where they could see the play develop. From this stance they should charge forward and outward, and turn the play in to a teammate. The idea was to separate or tear apart an offensive line which was trying to stay together. Each lineman was responsible for territory on the outside so that there was little danger of being outflanked. This system was strong against end runs, lateral passes, and forward passes. Linemen could use their hands to advantage because they were high enough to see and diagnose the play intelligently. (Diagram 3).

The In-Charging System.—The *in-charging* system was favored by coaches who believed the defensive linemen should play wide and low, charge in toward the ball-carrier and pile up the play before the offense had time to organize. The aim here was to exert lateral pressure on the offensive line, causing it to compress so closely together that it piled up its own plays. This system was strong against plays through the line, and it hurried forward passers. It was adapted to small men who would dare not play as high as linemen played in the other system.

Both systems had their weaknesses. The out-charging style of line play required very large men. It was not aggressive. It was weak in the center and often left huge holes through which the offensive backs might plunge. The burden of the defense was placed on the defensive backs, who were required to do most of the tackling. The in-charging system was a blind defense and was subject to trick plays. In addition,

it was easily outflanked for long runs. The territorial responsibility of the linemen overlapped so that at times they attempted to protect the same spot, while some huge gap was left uncovered. (Diagram 4).

The Straight-Charging System or Cup Defense.—These two systems of defensive line play evolved into the *straight-charging* or *cup* defense. The theory back of this system was that the first movement of each lineman should be straight ahead. Each was responsible for the territory immediately in front of him. This eliminated territorial overlapping. In fact, this defense included most of the strong points of the other two systems and eliminated many of the weaknesses. The

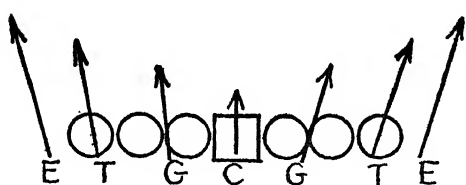


DIAGRAM 3.—The out-charging system of line defense.

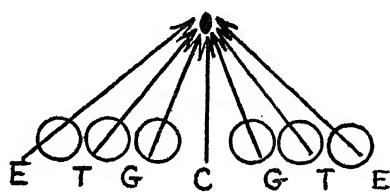


DIAGRAM 4.—The in-charging system of line defense.

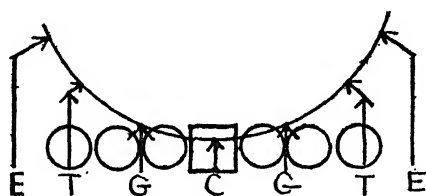


DIAGRAM 5.—The straight-charging or cup defense.

end's path across the line of scrimmage was a compromise between the sharp angle charge of the in-charging and the straight-across or drift-out movement of the out-charging system. The tackle played high as in the out-charging defense, the guard low and similar to the guard in the in-charging system. All charged straight ahead in the first movement and protected their individual territory. Their second movement was then to fight toward the ball-carrier. This defense was equally strong outside and in the center. It was not blind, yet it was aggressive and intelligent. It did not require seven especially large strong men or seven rather small fast men. It was adapted to a combination of large slow, and small fast players. (Diagram 5).

Since the ends had no opponent immediately confronting them they could get farther across the line than the guards or center who were opposed by two men. The tackles could get farther across than the

guards, but not so far as the ends. Theoretically, then, after the initial charge the defensive line was supposed to envelope the attack in the form of a cup or half-moon and supported behind by the secondary. The idea was to turn the play in to a teammate.

The Drifting Defense.—The *drifting defense* was a later development of this system and similar to it except the entire line moved laterally or drifted with the ball-carrier, attempting at all times to keep the latter enveloped within this cup formation. This system never gained wide acceptance because it required extra-powerful linemen to move laterally and fight off the opposition with the hands without being easily blocked out of the play.

Fundamental Principles of Modern Line Play.—While modern line play no longer consists entirely of any one system described above it will include fundamental principles employed in all of them.

1. In the first place, a defensive lineman must *charge across the line of scrimmage* and “beat” his opponent to the charge, if possible. In this respect he plays as the guard in the in-charging system described above. There should be no waiting, drifting or wrestling as in the out-charging or drifting defenses. He should get his entire body across the line.

2. Secondly, he should *protect the territory immediately* in front of him. This principle is taken from the straight-charging or cup defense. He must carry out the first principle, i.e., “beat” his opponent across the line, or he will probably be unable to carry out the second assignment. In other words, he must keep his body under control and not allow himself to be overpowered, if he is to successfully protect his territory. If hit hard and forced back, he should *retreat over his own territory* and not to either side. By giving ground sideways he leaves a gaping on one side or the other.

3. In the third place, he should *fight toward the ball-carrier and make the tackle*, if possible. But after, and only after, he has charged and protected his territory. The lineman should always bear in mind that if he fights resistance, he will usually be going toward the ball. If he is being blocked from the inside, the play will doubtless be inside and vice versa. On the other hand, if he meets no resistance, he should drop down on his hands and feet and anticipate a “mouse-trap” play. By stopping immediately he *protects his territory first*. One of the greatest weaknesses in line play is the over-eagerness to make tackles. Every lineman should be impressed with the idea that the secondary defense should do most of the tackling. Naturally, this does not mean

that the linemen should never make any tackles. Every defensive player is responsible for stopping the ball-carrier, if he can do so, but not at the expense of failure to protect his position.

Spacing on the Six-Man Line.—In addition to the above fundamentals each lineman must know how to shift to meet every conceivable offensive formation.

Diagram 12 shows a standard 6-2-2-1 defense against a single wing, unbalanced line formation. The spacing of the guards and tackles should be noted. If each stands with outstretched arms his finger tips will almost touch the teammate on either side of him. This makes a rather ideal alignment. Each defensive lineman is responsible for a space approximately the width of two or two and one-half offensive linemen. Moreover, this spacing should be closely approximated against all types of close running formations, regardless of the alignment of the offensive line and backs.

The defensive end should not be concerned primarily with the ball-carrier. He must make certain that no interferers precede the man with the ball across the line of scrimmage. He should, therefore, take out all interference.

The guards and tackles operate on the same fundamental principle. They must take out the interferers, even if they are forced to tackle them.

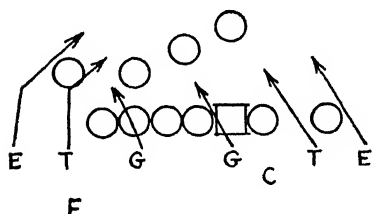
Spacing on the Seven-Man Line.—Diagram 13 shows a seven-man line against a single wing, unbalanced line formation. It should be noted that the defensive guards are spaced slightly closer and the short side guard and tackle also play closer together. On the other hand, the space between the strong side guard and tackle is wider. This is as it should be since the strong side defensive tackle plays wide and charges from the *outside in* toward the backfield at an angle. In this formation, he is definitely responsible for the territory to his right, i.e., to his inside, while the defensive end on his side is responsible for the territory to his left and to the outside. In addition to proper spacing the linemen should charge as a unit.

The Defensive Huddle.—Since modern football requires several defensive formations by a team which hopes to win consistently, it is almost imperative that it employ a defensive huddle. While the attacking team is huddling and getting its signal, the defensive team should also huddle and discuss the various possible plays which might be launched against it in view of the particular tactical situation. Such discussion might include the down and distance to be gained, the score and time remaining, the condition of the personnel of the opponents

At this particular moment, and other factors. These facts should be analyzed so that long or short gainer plays may be anticipated and the point of attack predicted with reasonable accuracy.

Line Charging.—The rules require a one second pause by the attacking team before the ball is snapped after shifting into position. This pause gives the defensive field general time to call a defensive signal after a quick analysis of the possibilities of the opponent's formation. This signal should indicate one of several types of line charging by the line in cooperation with the close secondary. Included among these are:

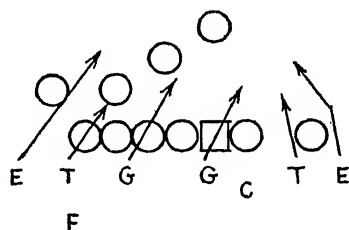
1. Charging to the strong side of the offensive play.
2. Charging to the short side of the offensive play.
3. Charging in toward the center of the offensive formation. (The In-Charging System).
4. Charging out away from the center of the offensive formation. (The Out-Charging System).



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DIAGRAM 6.—Line charging to the strong side of the offensive play.

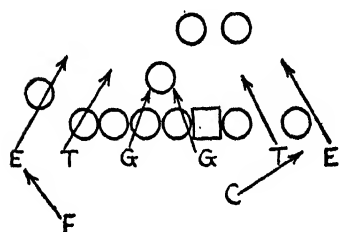
DIAGRAM 7.—Line charging to the short side of the offensive formation.

Charging to the Strong Side of the Offensive Play.—In this defensive maneuver (Diagram 6) all linemen on a six-man line except the strong side end should charge at an angle of 30 to 45 degrees to the strong or unbalanced side of the offensive play. The end should charge at his usual angle of 45 degrees in toward the offensive backfield, but he should pay particular attention to protecting the outside. The other five linemen should charge across the line of scrimmage as deeply as possible, *always protecting their left*. They should not be

so concerned about territory to the right since it will be adequately protected by the teammate on the right.

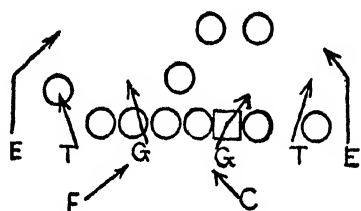
The defensive center and fullback, *F*, should charge in the *opposite direction* from the line charge. This means the center's first duty is to protect the territory *outside* the short side defensive end, unless a pass play develops. In the latter situation he should cover the territory assigned him for pass defense, which is usually a space about 15 yards over the center of the line. The fullback's action is indicated in the diagram.

Charging to the Short Side of the Offensive Formation.—Diagram 7 indicates the charge to the short side. The strategy here is just the opposite of that employed when the charge is toward the strong side. Here again the five linemen charge toward the short side while the end on that side drives in at the customary angle. The latter



H "F" AND "C" READY TO REINFORCE
TO OUTSIDE

S



H CLOSE BACKER-UPS ARE READY
TO REINFORCE CENTER

S

DIAGRAM 8.—The line converges and the
two backers-up protect the outside.

DIAGRAM 9.—The line charges out and the
close secondary protect the center.

protects to the right or outside as do all the other linemen. Meanwhile, the close secondary protect in the other direction.

It should be stated that if the play does not go to the short side, all players naturally should defend against it regardless of its character.

Charging Toward the Center of the Offensive Formation. The In-charging Line.—In the early days of football this was known as the *in-charging system* of defensive line play.

In this unified charge all defensive linemen converge toward the center of strength of the offensive formation. The two backers-up both protect to the outside. This strategy is particularly effective against short gainer plays, and is frequently used near the goal line. Diagram 8).

Charging Away from the Center of the Offensive Formation. The Out-Charging Line.—In this method the defensive unit splits in the middle with three linemen charging out at an angle toward the short side and, likewise, three charging out at an angle toward the strong side. The close secondary are responsible for territory in the center. This defense is effective against long-gainer sweeps to the outside. (Diagram 9).

Other Variations of Line Play.—In addition to the defensive line play described above there are other variations which may be employed. Since more running plays are directed toward the strong side tackle and guard than against any other two linemen it follows that they are in the most important positions on a majority of the plays. Their territory is likely to be especially vulnerable any place on the

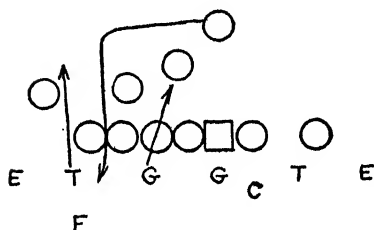


DIAGRAM 10.—Incorrect charge by the defensive tackle and guard.

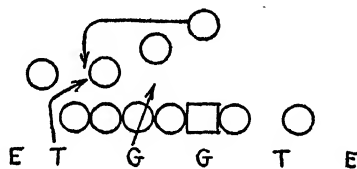


DIAGRAM 11.—Correct angle charge by the defensive tackle and guard.

field. In Diagram 10 a defensive weakness is indicated, since the tackle has charged straight across while the guard has driven in toward the center of the attacking formation at an angle of 45 degrees. This lack of teamwork is fatal if the play happens to be directed over this space. It is clear that the tackle could be readily taken out and the guard could be easily blocked in. The latter, in reality, would be taking himself out of the play. Since the two men charge at different angles a hole between them is inevitable. It will be large enough for the ball-carrier to drive through, preceded by a convoy of blockers sufficient in numbers to clear the close secondary and penetrate far into defensive territory.

The Coordinated Charge of the Defensive Tackle and Guard on the Strong Side.—This is illustrated in Diagram 11. It should be noted how the tackle converges toward the center of the attacking strength after he has broken past the end and wing-back. In this way he gives the guard protection to the inside and prevents an entering wedge between them. It is a fundamental principle of offensive line play to open a hole in the defensive line, and so conversely, it is a fundamental

principle of defensive line play to prevent such holes. The latter objective can only be accomplished by coordinated line play, in which each individual on the line knows exactly what his team will do on every play.

Suppose, for example, that Team A has possession of the ball on Team B's 30-yard line, third down, nine yards to go, and the game a scoreless tie with three minutes remaining in the second quarter. Suppose, further, that Team A is weak against all types of reverse plays and dangerous in its attack to the strong side. In addition, it has a dependable passer and powerful runner in the tailback position who is especially gifted in running inside and outside tackle. In the situation described it is obvious a short gainer play would not be used. Furthermore, it is not likely a reverse or short side play would be called. The defense, therefore, would have two types of plays to stop, a run or pass, beginning from the strong side. There would also be a probability of a trick play of the gambling type. Doubtless it would be used on the strong, rather than the short side. The defense should charge to the strong side, at the same time anticipating a pass or a run inside or outside tackle. The secondary should be alert for a pass and a sweep to the outside. With the line charging properly as a unit and the backs reenforcing correctly, the chances of a successful long-gainer are greatly reduced.

If the tactical situation is carefully analyzed by the defensive players, it may surprise them to learn how limited the attacking possibilities really are. Most offensive teams, unless exceptionally well coached, have "pet" plays which they invariably use in given situations. The defense should know what these are. One of the greatest of all morale-builders is the ability to stop an "ace" runner or passer.

The Play of the Guards.—It should not be assumed that standard defenses like the 6-2-2-1 or the 7-1-2-1 are employed in a stereotyped and unchangeable manner. An intelligent defense varies its alignment to meet specific plays or unusual strength.

In the six-man line, *the two guards may even play one man apart*, if properly protected by their tackles on the outside and supported by the secondary behind. More than one famous coach plays his guards in this manner. Other coaches employ the guards and tackles as separate and distinct units with the proper support coming from the backers-up and the ends. There is much to be said in favor of both methods.

Overshifting.—A "lop-sided," over-balanced, over-shifted arrangement of the defensive linemen is frequently the most effective under

certain tactical conditions. If a long-gainer play is almost the *only probability* after a distance penalty or disastrous fumble, it is intelligent football to play to stop long-gainers and take some chances on the success of short bucks and short side runs. In this situation, the strong side defensive tackle should shift out opposite the wing-back and the two guards should shift as much as one full man toward the strong side. The short side tackle should drop back about three yards and protect the territory outside the end on his side and the close secondary should play back approximately five yards and look for a pass. For the same the halfbacks should play back about twelve yards.

Thus the whole defensive scheme, as outlined, is designed to stop the more probable and most dangerous play.

The Sliding Defense.—Another variation in the standard defenses is the use of the "sliding" lineman. Under certain conditions one lineman may move laterally along the line of scrimmage. This play requires an experienced lineman to whom the coach will permit a great deal of latitude. He should be strong, and fast, and the type of boy who is seldom or never taken completely out of a play. He should always be ready to drop to the ground, if the play comes over his territory.

Tackles Back.—Another effective defensive "stunt" is the tackles back formation. Here the tackles line up from one to three yards behind the line of scrimmage and drive in toward the play as the ball is snapped. Two aggressive tackles can demoralize a team which lacks poise and experience.

The Defense Against "Mouse-Traps."—Inexperienced linemen, who are over-eager to tackle the man with the ball, are likely to be "mouse-trapped" repeatedly by a clever offense. This is because they fail to protect their territory *first*. "Mouse-trapping" is accomplished by permitting a defensive guard or tackle to penetrate beyond the line of scrimmage *without opposition*. He is then blocked out from the side by a back or lineman, just as he is about to make the tackle. The ball-carrier, who is a good actor, is excellent "bait" for a "sucker" lineman.

Defensive linemen can easily learn to recognize "mouse-trap" plays. If no opposition is met on the initial charge, the defensive player should be extremely careful by stopping immediately and by dropping down on his hands and feet. Occasionally, he may be blocked *from the outside*. Ordinarily, however, he should face inward toward the play and *let the ball-carrier come to him* or allow someone else to tackle him. *Under no circumstances should he go after the ball-carrier.* He may expect to be hit by some opponent. On close plays he will be hit

CHAPTER 5

DEFENSIVE TEAM PLAY

Each year, when the Rules Committee meets to determine rule changes needed in the modern game of football, it is confronted with a debate over the relative strength of the offense and defense. In fact, for years the Committee has attempted to maintain some degree of balance between the two, with the *attack* enjoying a slight edge. Coaches are in rather general agreement, however, that the *defense* now has some advantage. This has been overcome in certain instances by a few leading coaches who teach a daring offensive.

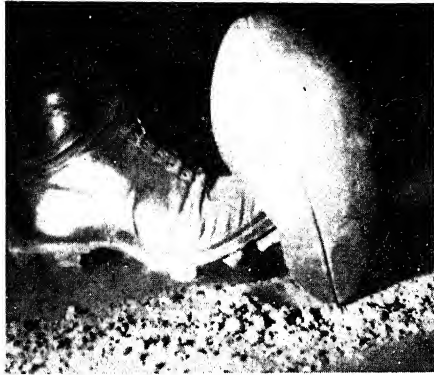
Not many years ago, it was considered intelligent tactics to score touchdowns by driving through the line, either straight in or on a slant. Today, however, very few touchdowns are scored in this way. More often, at present, it is a well designed and tricky type of running or passing play which scores the touchdown. The modern offense, with its wide-open attack stressing spinners, "mouse-traps," and forward and lateral passing should play havoc with the defense.

Because of this variety of attack, the coach should spend more time on his defense than in former years. Since he must develop a defense to cover every situation on the field, and especially near the goal line, he must take advantage of everything at his disposal with respect to playing personnel. He should design a system that is sound at all times and yet, when his opponents are able to overpower his team by sheer strength, he must design some type of unorthodox defense. This may have a tendency to confound the opposition and bolster the morale of his own team to such an extent that he is able to win a game which otherwise might have been lost.

The standard defenses against certain offensive formations are diagrammed and discussed below. In any defensive scheme, enough latitude must be given the players on the field under actual game conditions so they can adjust their movements to any changes in the attack. Naturally, the coach does not know exactly what his opponents will use offensively, and can decide only within limits from his scouting-reports what that offense actually will be.

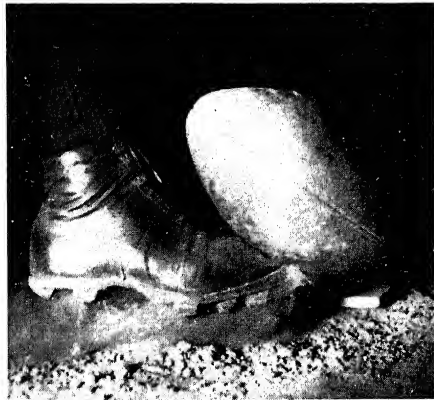
The Importance of Tackling.—A discussion of defensive football would not be complete without emphasizing the importance

THE DROP KICK



a

Shows where the kicker's toe should meet the ball, midway between the point and belly of the ball.



b

The ball recovers its symmetry, rolls back over the toe, and begins to rise.



c

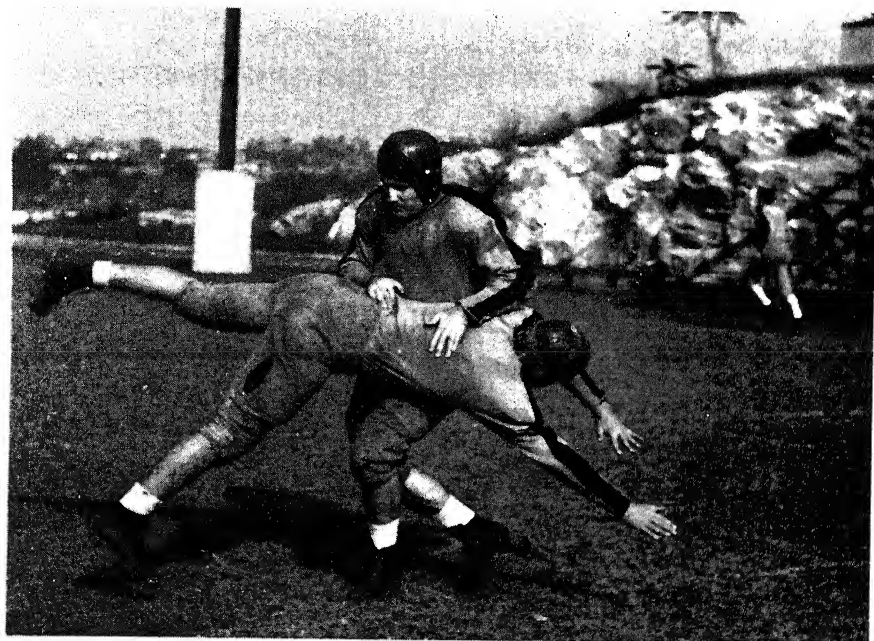
Keystone (FPG)

The ball has left the foot.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE CROSS BODY BLOCK: The blocker approaches his opponent.



"Pic" (FPG)

THE CROSS BODY BLOCK: The blocker has thrown his body across that of

of tackling. Just as blocking is the essence of offensive football, so is tackling the essence of defensive football. Eleven determined tacklers are difficult to defeat. This has been demonstrated by some recent teams, whose linemen have been aptly called blocks of granite.

Due to the modern trend toward offensive football, few coaches spend sufficient time teaching this important defensive fundamental. Tackling skill can be taught, but it takes a great amount of time and patience to accomplish satisfactory results. The tackling dummy must first be "dusted off" and when the players have developed the correct fundamentals of balance and form in contacting the dummy with their shoulders, arms, and head, then, and only then, should "live" tackling be introduced. This practice on fellow-players presents a real opportunity to develop the necessary skill of stopping opponents under approximate game conditions. Above everything else in tackling, *the eyes should be open*. There is no place for a blind man on a football field.

Backfield Tackling Practice.—An excellent method of teaching team tackling, in addition to blocking and ball carrying, is to line up two teams wearing full protection. The defensive line should play "dummy" scrimmage while the four backs and the center on defense are doing "live" tackling. The offensive linemen and backs merely use passive blocking on the defensive linemen, but do real blocking on the defensive backs and center. In this manner, the perfect play is demonstrated to the secondary for defensive practice. By giving them an opportunity to tackle under game conditions this method develops their ability to diagnose plays quickly, to reenforce the line promptly, and to ward off blockers effectively. To make it more difficult, the offensive team should go into a huddle before every scrimmage and use occasional pass plays in order to keep the secondary back where it belongs. Various benefits result from this type of drill. In addition to developing individual skill in offensive and defensive maneuvers, it adds the element of team play. This, in turn, makes the practice more interesting and less monotonous and boring. The defensive and offensive linemen should get their practice during the daily line scrimmage. Linemen who are weak in tackling should be shifted to the defensive backfield to improve their skill in this fundamental. The coach should remember that a hard tackling team is never badly defeated within its class.

Defensive Strategy.—Since the modern trend in football is toward a wide-open offense, the coach should defend first against a long-gainer, and secondly against short-gainer plays. It takes a great

for tackling the runner rests entirely upon the secondary defense, including the *center* and the *four backs*. Naturally, if the linemen can spill the interference and still get the ball-carrier so much the better.

The Backers-Up.—The man placed in the position designated by the letter *F* should be the fastest and quickest moving of the two assigned to the backer-up positions. He must be rugged, a quick and clever diagnostician of offensive plays, and he should also be a leader, who constantly encourages and inspires the linemen to greater attainments

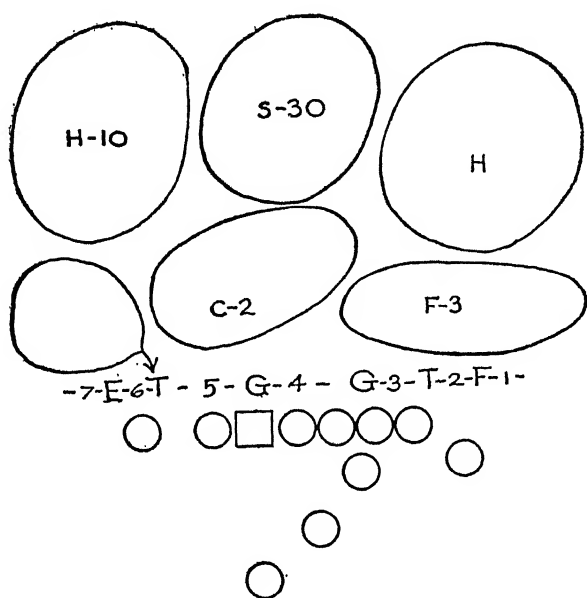


DIAGRAM 12.—The standard 6-2-2-1 defensive formation.

in their individual play. The center *C* is usually placed on the short side and he should be the same general type of defensive man as *F*. If there is a difference in speed of these two players, the faster man should be placed at *F*.

Defensive man *F* should reinforce holes 2 to 5 inclusive by driving directly at the ball-carrier after he has successfully diagnosed the play. When protecting hole number 1, he should keep ahead of the play and try for a tackle *behind* the line of scrimmage. If he finds an interferer in front of the runner, he should dispose of him so the defensive half-back on his side *may* have an unimpeded opportunity to make the tackle. This is a sounder defense than would be the case if player *F* tried to make the tackle himself while partially or completely blocked

by an interferer. On reverse plays, whether inside or outside the short side end, *F* should *always* look for a cut-back behind the line of scrimmage by the runner. This maneuver would bring the ball-carrier right back over *F*'s position and he should not try, therefore, to get in front or ahead of him as he reverses to the short side.

Defensive man *C* should reinforce holes 3 to 6 inclusive in the same manner as *F* reinforces holes 2 to 5. When defending against a play over hole number 1, he should not try to get *ahead* of the play. On the contrary, he should look for a possible cut-back by the runner and should try to keep directly opposite him across the line of scrimmage. He is then in position to make the tackle if the ball-carrier does cross into defensive territory and cut-back.

From the above discussion, it can readily be seen that *F* and *C* must work closely together, each defending his own territory first, and then reinforcing elsewhere. At times each protects the same territory simultaneously, as each is responsible for spaces 3, 4, and 5. It is apparent, too, on wide sweeps to either side, that one defends the territory left vacant by the other. It is imperative that *C* play from one-half to one yard closer to the line of scrimmage than *F*, as there is more threat from quick bucks over center and to the short side. The ideal position for *F* to assume is about three yards directly back of the strong side tackle. The center should station himself about 2 or 3 yards directly opposite hole number 5, which is the space between the defensive guard and tackle on the short side.

The Halfbacks.—The defensive halfback should assume a position about 8 to 10 yards back of the line of scrimmage and slightly outside the offensive wingback. The down, and the position of the ball on the field, will determine his exact distance. With the possibility of a long-gainer or pass-play imminent, he should drop back to 12 yards. He should not stand too close to the side lines. They are his best allies, since the territory beyond them cannot be invaded by the opposing attack.

The ever-present thought in the defensive halfback's mind should be to remain in position for an instant and really diagnose the play. This should be done by watching closely the movements of the offensive end and wing back on his side. If they "double-team" on the defensive tackle, it is obviously a running play and he should come up fast to reinforce the line. If the wing back or end break downfield, ignoring the defensive tackle, it is likely to be a forward pass or a play to the opposite side of the line. By following one or both men, he will automatically draw himself into the play. This is especially true

if his team is playing a man-for-man defense on forward passes. If his team is playing a zone or combination pass defense, he should delay for a very short time and drift slightly in the direction of the man who is coming into his territory.

In the event the play develops into a wide end run to the strong side, the halfback should come up very *fast to the outside* keeping *ahead* of the play. He is primarily responsible for the protection of the territory outside the end. He must always remember that the end on a six-man line or less *is not responsible for the ball carrier*, but is assigned the task of clearing out all interference in front of the runner. The halfback should make the tackle *on or behind* the line of scrimmage. The most difficult task of a defensive halfback is that of determining, quickly and correctly, whether he should come up fast or delay his start. Rather than rush in blindly, it is far better for him to remain in position and definitely determine that a running play has been launched. There is always the possibility that a teammate may make an exceptionally fine play by tackling the runner on territory supposed to be guarded by the halfback. The judgment needed comes from experience and constant practice and is one of the determining factors in evaluating the ability of the defensive halfback.

The responsibility of the *short-side defensive halfback* is greatly similar to that of the other back. He is primarily responsible for the territory *outside* the short-side end, and he *must* make the tackle *on or back of the line of scrimmage*. He, too, must remember that the weak-side end is not responsible for the ball-carrier skirting his positions, but is responsible for the elimination of *all* interference in front of the runner. On wide sweeps or end runs to the *strong side*, he *takes the place of the safety man* by cutting across behind the line of scrimmage and angling back toward the position which the safety man previously occupied. He should go to the *outside* of the developing play, in order to protect against downfield lateral passing. It is extremely important that both defensive halfbacks be taught not to cut *in* toward the line of scrimmage on wide sweeps to the opposite side of the field. When the defensive halfback assumes the duties of the safety man, he must recognize fully his new responsibility of being the *last* man between the opposition and the goal line. He must, therefore, be doubly sure he drives the ball-carrier to the side line and *makes him "commit" himself* or show his intentions first.

The Safety Man.—The safety man is, as his name implies, the last line of defense between the ball-carrier and the goal line. For this reason, he should be the *surest open field tackler on the squad*. Many

coaches will sacrifice offensive strength in the backfield for the safety factor in this position.

He should station himself about 30 to 35 yards back of the line of scrimmage and in the middle of the offensive formation. When the play develops, he should move forward from 10 to 15 yards, depending upon the down and the position of the ball on the field. Under no circumstances should he permit the ball to go over his head on a quick kick from a close running formation. In addition, he should permit the completion of no long passes behind him.

He reinforces *all defensive secondary men* by taking their place in the defensive system, when they have moved out of their initial positions. He should come up on the *outside of the defensive halfbacks* but under full control in relation to balance, so he is always ready to make the tackle on downfield lateral passing. This is especially true on the completion of short passes over the line of scrimmage, which more often than not develop into outside lateral passes.

His primary task is to act as co-ordinator of the backfield defense. Under no consideration, however, should he *ever be* tricked out of position as the play develops. His one thought should be that of "safety first" at all times.

The Seven-Diamond or 7-1-2-1 Defense.—The seven-man line, with the backs arranged in the shape of a diamond, is still a widely used and popular defense. It is especially effective deep in the offensive team's territory, where the possibility of long-gainer plays of the gambling type is practically eliminated by the position of the ball on the field. Many coaches gamble on stopping a team deep in its own territory, thereby forcing it to punt and relinquish possession of the ball. This defensive strategy is fundamentally sound and is often designated as "being on the offense when the other team has the ball." Its effectiveness will be nullified, however, unless the defensive line has been taught to charge very aggressively, and completely stop three plays in succession. Teams coached by the late Knute Rockne exemplified this type of aggressive defensive play. (Diagram 13).

Center Play.—Many coaches employ the 7-1-2-1 as well as the standard 6-2-2-1 defense in practically every game. It is advisable to line up defensively in a 6-2-2-1 formation, and have the center hop into the line of scrimmage at a certain prearranged position a moment before the ball is snapped. By this method the coach may quickly obtain regular or irregular spacing of the defensive line. In this way, the opposition may frequently be confused to such an extent in their assignments that defensive linemen may be able to slide through the

offensive line without any opposition. When the center does jump into the defensive line, he should seldom charge forward in an aggressive manner. On the contrary, he should use a "hand-shiver charge" on the offensive man immediately in front of him, or dive under the play on line bucks over his position. In addition, he should pull out of the defensive line on wide sweeps to either side, or drop back fast on pass plays. This maneuvering by the center has a tendency to disorganize the offensive pre-arranged double-teaming, and break down

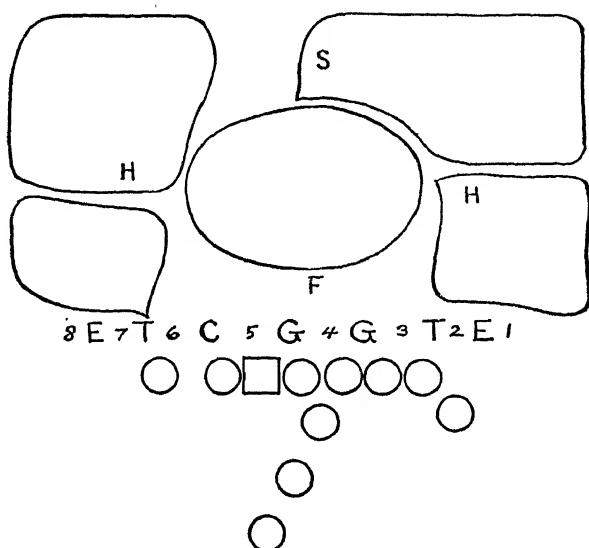


DIAGRAM 13.—The standard 7-1-2-1 or diamond defense.

the morale of the opponents. It takes long hours of drill to perfect this type of defense, but the results are worth the time and effort. Despite the fact the center often plays in the line, it should be remembered that he is primarily responsible for covering the same territory on defense that the center covers when helping to reinforce a six-man line in a 6-2-2-1 defense. His initial starting position in coming out of the line after the ball has been snapped is only about one to three yards from the position he generally assumes in the 6-2-2-1 defense.

Fullback Play.—In the 7-1-2-1 defense the fullback assumes a position about five yards behind the line of scrimmage and approximately in the center of the offensive formation (Diagram 13). This position should not be assumed before the offensive team lines up, but should be taken just prior to the snapping of the ball. He moves over to this position as the center jumps into the line. Since the fullback has seven

men in front of him on the line of scrimmage, he does not need to reinforce them as quickly as he would a six-man line. He should delay somewhat in coming up and should be absolutely sure of diagnosing the play correctly before he reinforces the line.

The fullback should not remain in one definite position and make a stationary target of himself. A skillful player is constantly moving and shifting about in such a way that it is very difficult for blockers to locate him quickly. Thus he has an unobstructed opportunity to get to the ball-carrier and make the tackle.

Since the fullback is the only man close behind the line when the play starts, he is primarily responsible for reinforcing all holes in the line of scrimmage. The definite responsibility of the ends, in a seven man line, is to prevent the ball-carrier from getting outside their defensive positions. In other words, they must turn the play in to the defensive fullback so he can make the tackle. It is obvious, therefore, that the fullback should not be expected to keep ahead of sweep plays to either side, but should try to make the tackle at any point in the developing play. He should do this by keeping slightly behind the runner and by aiding the end, to a certain extent, in boxing him. Moreover, by being slightly behind the runner, he is in an excellent position to defend against an inside lateral pass play. In the 7-1-2-1 defense the center is responsible for cut-backs by the runner and should be on the alert for them on wide sweep plays by the offense. Teamwork on the part of the center and fullback is essential.

Play of the Defensive Halfbacks.—The chief point of attack for which the defensive halfbacks are responsible, apart from pass plays, is on the outside of each of the defensive ends. They are not required to reinforce a seven-man line to the same extent as a six-man line. For this reason, each *must learn to come up on the outside* of the developing sweep-play to his side and make the tackle. In addition, each must be on the *alert* for an outside lateral pass. Their good judgment should dictate which course to pursue by the presence or absence of an opposing offensive player in position to receive a lateral pass. On sweep-plays to the opposite side, each halfback is responsible for taking the place generally assumed by the safety man, in addition to his regular responsibility. This is discussed thoroughly under play of the halfbacks in a 6-2-2-1 defense.

Play of the Safety Man.—The play of the safety man in the 7-1-2-1 and the 6-2-2-1 defenses is quite similar. He has a greater responsibility on forward pass defense in the 7-1-2-1, but his primary responsibility is still "safety first" at all times.

SPECIAL DEFENSES.—In addition to the so-called standard defenses there are several special defenses which, in time, may come to be standard. Among these are the 6-3-2; the 6-2-1-2, 7-2-2; and the 5-3-2-1.

The 6-3-2 Defense.—The six man line operates exactly the same in the 6-3-2 as in the 6-2-2-1 defense. The difference in the formation is in the arrangement of the backs and center. It is a powerful defense against a strong running attack, but it is weak against passes, especially long ones down the middle or to either side. Some coaches use this formation when defending their own goal line and it is very efficient under these conditions because the end-zone line prevents long passes. It is not recommended for use in the middle of the field.

The Center.—The man backing up the center of the line stations himself about three yards back of the center of the offensive formation. He is primarily responsible for reinforcing the line on all bucks and he is also responsible for cut-backs. For this reason, he should not rush immediately from his position to defend against sweeps. On passes he should defend the territory over center.

The Two Close Backs.—The two close defensive backs are three yards outside their own defensive ends and three yards back of the line of scrimmage. They are in an excellent position to defend against sweeps and off-tackle plays to either side, and they can help reinforce the center of the line.

The Two Rear Backs.—The two rear halfbacks on defense occupy the roles of safety men, each defending his side of the field and reinforcing the other side on wide sweeps. It is very important that they play an extremely safe game in defending their positions.

The 6-2-1-2 Defense.—As indicated by Diagram 14, this is another special type of defense. When operated intelligently, it works successfully against a running attack as well as against passes thrown into the territory about fifteen yards over center. In many ways it is more difficult to gain through it than the 6-3-2 defense because it is much stronger against passes and nearly as strong against sweeps to either side.

The two close backs operate in the same manner as the two close backs in the 6-2-2-1 defense, with the exception that they may station themselves a little wider apart. The back in the *spot* position is about nine yards back of the line of scrimmage and directly in the center of the offensive formation. He is in an ideal position to reinforce the two close backs and by coming up fast he can readily stop any gaps in the center of the line. Furthermore, he is in an excellent position to

stop one of the most difficult passes in football to defend against, i.e., the pass about fifteen yards over center.

The two rear backs are from 15 to 18 yards back of the line of scrimmage and both act as safety men on their side of the field. They both come up fast *on the outside* when defending against wide sweeps.

The 5-3-2-1 Defense.—In 1937, the trend in defensive football seemed to be definitely moving toward extensive use of the five-man line. This was particularly true in certain areas of the country, although it was employed to some extent in all sections. It was used

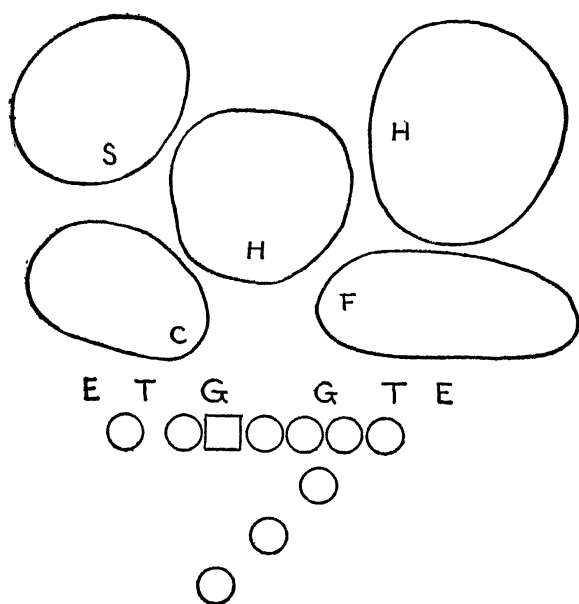


DIAGRAM 14.—The 6-2-1-2 or spot defense.

years ago against spread formations, and it was also employed against standard formations late in the game when a team in the lead was protecting itself against long runs and passes. It was not, however, a standard defense.

Recent developments in the game of football, including more forward and lateral passing, have resulted in wide experimentation in defenses designed to stop wide-open attacks. One of the most common experimental formations has been the 5-3-2-1 alignment. One of the reasons, of course, for its real success has been the fact that offensive plays have been taught to meet six- and seven-man lines. Whether it will remain as a dependable defense after the attack has more experience against it remains to be seen. Like other formations it has its

weaknesses. For example, the New York Football Giants (1937) held the strong Chicago Bears to 3 points with this defense and then were soundly beaten by the Washington Redskins, with the great Sammy Baugh throwing passes almost at will. There were too few defensive linemen rushing the passer, and when a skillful passer is not rushed the defense has little chance to prevent the completion of the passes.

The Line.—In this defense (Diagram 15) the fundamental principle involved is for the five defensive linemen to “dig in” and protect their territory by keeping low at all times and by constantly submarining

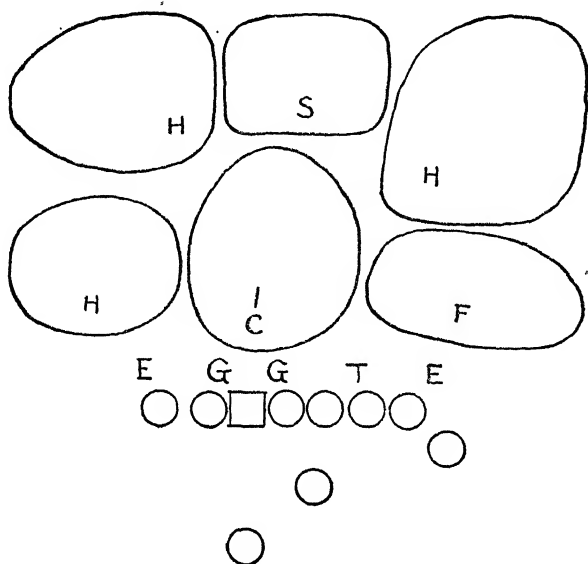


DIAGRAM 15.—The 5-3-2-1 defense.

under plays aimed at their territory. The five men are spaced equally in front of the offensive line with one end slightly outside the offensive short side end and the other just outside the strong side wingback. The duty of each is to break up the interference and allow the tackling to be done by the close line-backers reinforced by the two halfbacks.

The Backers-Up.—The close backs on the flanks should play about three yards back of the line of scrimmage and about three yards outside their respective ends. They *must* come in fast to reinforce the line and be extremely aggressive at all times. The close back in the middle should play directly opposite the center of the offensive formation. Among other duties he should reinforce on bucks to either side, and should look for cut-back plays coming toward his position from either

flank. He should take a chance and try to break through to make tackles on sweep plays behind the line of scrimmage. His defensive play demands speed, experience, and great courage as the offense concentrates on him at all times. The two defensive halfbacks and safety man play as in the 6-2-2-1 defense.

The Seven-Box or 7-2-2 Defense.—This defense was the late Knute Rockne's standard type of defense (Diagram 16). It is still rather widely used inside the thirty-yard line and is very strong against a running attack, but rather weak defensively against passes.

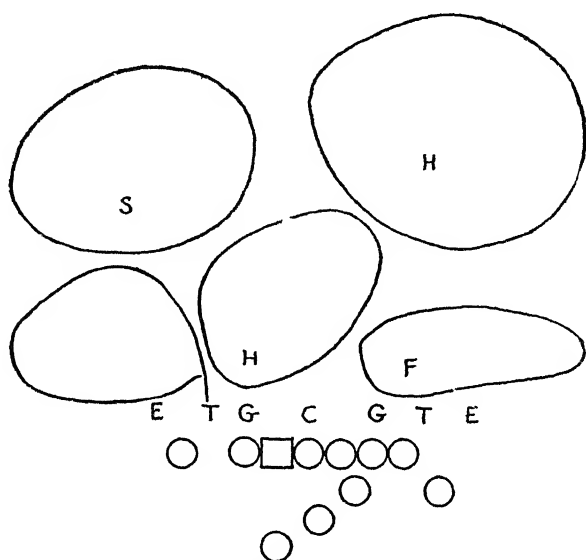


DIAGRAM 16.—The 7-2-2 or box defense.

The two close backers-up play somewhat wider than in the 6-2-2-1 defense but their primary duties are similar. Each rear back, who is about 18 to 20 yards from the line of scrimmage, acts as safety man on his side. Each must come up fast on the *outside* on sweep plays and must not allow any eligible pass receivers to get behind him. Their "safety" play must be of a high order and each must be an excellent open field tackler. Since this defense is often used as a goal line defense some teams do not shift into it until the ball is within the 10 or 15 yard line.

Standard Punt Formation Defense.—In the punt formation defense (Diagram 17) the two close backers-up, *F* and *C*, play directly behind the defensive tackles and are ready to reinforce the line on all bucks. This is especially true when the ball is snapped to a back other

than the tail or deep back. They should drive in to make the tackle on all types of sweep plays but *first* should make certain that a run develops and not a fake run with a pass. *F* and *C* must be unusually alert, since the tail back can still come forward about five yards and throw a pass after he gets the ball.

The defensive halfbacks are 10 to 15 yards back of the line of scrimmage and *always outside* the offensive ends. They must come up fast on wide sweeps and be ready to make the tackle in the event a bucking back penetrates the line and breaks past the close backers-up.

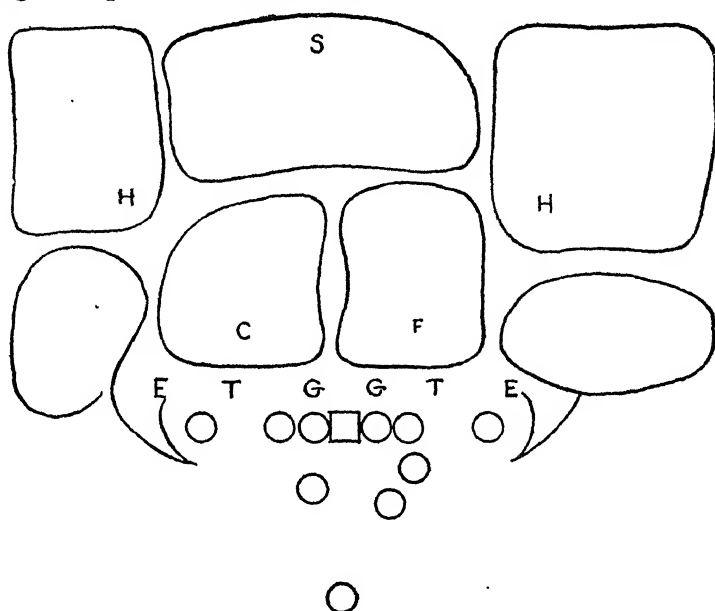


DIAGRAM 17.—The regular punt formation defense.

The safety man must play deep enough to handle punts as there is *always* the danger of a punt from this formation. On all other plays, whether pass or running plays, he converges on the ball but does so in a safe and conservative manner.

Short Punt Formation Defense.—When short punt formation is used by a well coached team with a balanced repertoire of offensive plays, it is one of the most difficult attacks to stop in modern football. It has not only the threat of wide open attack but its compactness lends itself to clever spinner plays and to possibilities in the form of power plays, especially bucks and slants off the tackles. With the ends spread 2 or 3 yards from the offensive tackles it is a most difficult assignment for the defensive tackles.

Some coaches have been successful defending against the short punt formation in recent years by *gambling* that the offensive team *can* and *will* run more *efficiently* and more *often* to its *right*, than to its left. If this chance is taken a lopsided or unbalanced defense can be set up with the defensive strength concentrated to the attacking team's right and with a minimum of defensive strength to its left side.

If Diagram 18 is closely examined, it will be seen that the defensive left tackle is playing "straight-away" on the offensive right end, or directly opposite him; the defensive left guard is stationed directly opposite the offensive right tackle, and the defensive left guard is playing

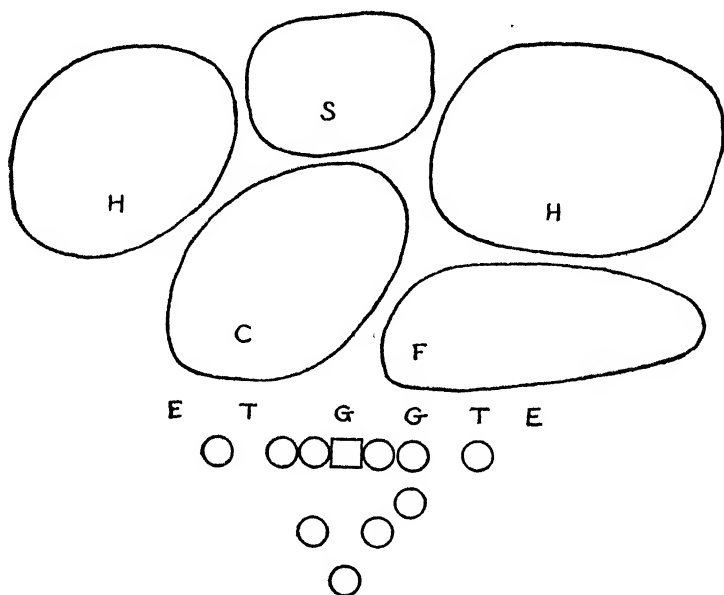


DIAGRAM 18.—An unbalanced defense against short punt formation.

directly opposite the center. In this formation the right tackle should play off or opposite the *left* shoulder of the offensive left tackle and make contact with him *on each play*. He should ignore the left end and try to get across the line of scrimmage by aggressive and fast charging. The defensive right end should charge at a 45 degree angle and get as far or deep as possible in the opposing backfield. These two men, the right tackle and right end, must charge unusually fast and aggressively so they will be able to smash the interference and rush the passer. The center and right defensive halfback must come in fast to protect the *outside* on sweep plays to the attacking team's left. Because the defense's left side is adequately protected on running plays,

the center does not need to commit himself so quickly to that side and can "look first" and "then charge" in regard to reinforcing his left side. This will also permit him to get back faster on pass defense. The backfield defense and pass defense is *exactly* the same as used in the standard 6-2-2-1 defense.

Most defensive teams use a standard 6-2-2-1 defense against the short punt formation as diagrammed in Diagram 19. If this defense is used, the ends must smash in fast, the tackles should play slightly outside the offensive tackles, and the guards should be placed directly opposite

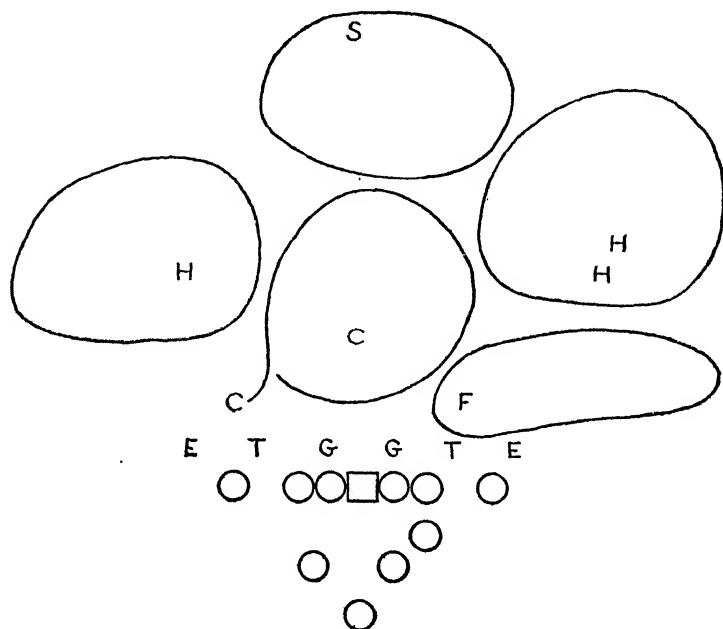


DIAGRAM 19.—A balanced defense against short punt formation.

the offensive guards. The two close backers-up, *F* and *C*, should play outside the defensive tackles and be ready at all times to reinforce the line. Again, the two halfbacks and safety man play as in the standard 6-2-2-1 with the safety man constantly alert for quick-kicks.

Spread Formations.—Spread formations are not used as extensively as they were in former years. Their chief value today lies in the surprise element, and most teams resort to them late in the game, when behind in the score, in a last desperate attempt to shake a clever runner loose on a pass play.

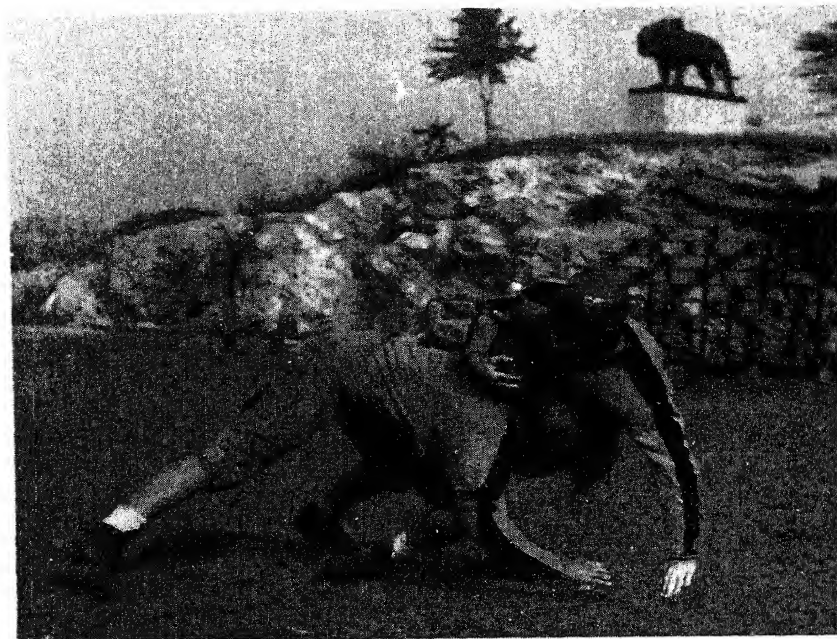
Since these formations are suddenly "sprung" on a defensive team

TACKLING



"Pic" (FPG)

TACKLING: The tackler ducks under the arms, drives his left shoulder into



"Pic" (FPG)

TACKLING: Note how both the ball-carrier and the tackler extend their arms to break their fall. This is a bad habit and frequently results in shoulder and elbow injuries.



"Pic" (FPG)

TACKLING: The tackler has driven the ball-carrier backward and has landed on top of him.

without advance notice it is highly important all possibilities be planned for systematically.

The Line.—In many instances such formations are used for bucking and passing. The guards and the two close line-backers, therefore, and to some extent the tackles must be responsible for all bucks. The defensive ends usually drop back 10 yards in order to help on pass defense. The first duty of each is to defend against sweep plays to his side and then drop back on pass defense, playing the ball when it is in the air on a pass.

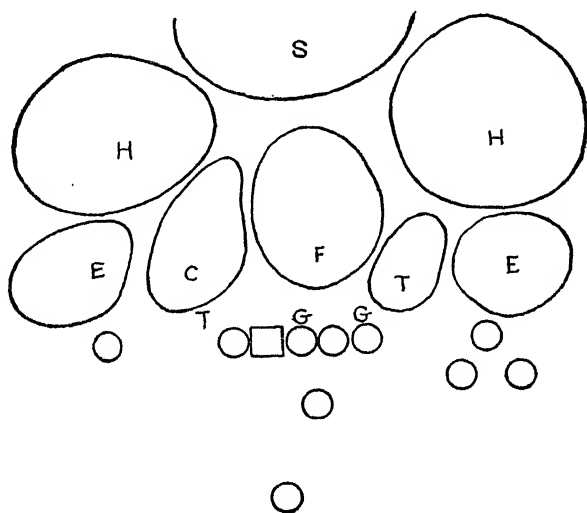


DIAGRAM 20.—Defense against a spread formation.

The Backs.—The two close backers-up should first defend against bucks but should always be alert to possible pass plays in their territory. Diagram 20 is a typical spread formation and the defensive alignment of players gives some idea of the general line of defensive play. Diagram 21 is another type of spread formation. A sufficient number of linemen are placed so they can stop the only man in position to buck. Moreover, the defensive strength is such that sweep plays and passes should also be effectively checked. A Zone Pass Defense can be used to good advantage as designated. The linemen must rush the passer in such a manner that he cannot fake a pass and run with the ball. This calls, however, for rather cautious rushing by the tackles but the guards can drive in with abandon and take chances.

Goal Line Defense.—Nowhere on the football field are the true fundamentals of football attack and defense so clearly demon-

end-zone line. Most teams go into a seven-man line when the ball is anywhere within its 20 yard line. By the time the ball is advanced within the ten yard line, practically all teams go into the seven-man line with the secondary very close. It is ridiculous for the backs to place themselves behind the goal line as a tackle made there is worthless. A seven-man line with an arrangement of three backs stationed close behind is recommended as a goal-line defense. Naturally, the distance of the backs behind the line depends upon the closeness of the ball to the goal line. The safety man will play close to it and slightly to the strong side of the offensive formation. A zone pass

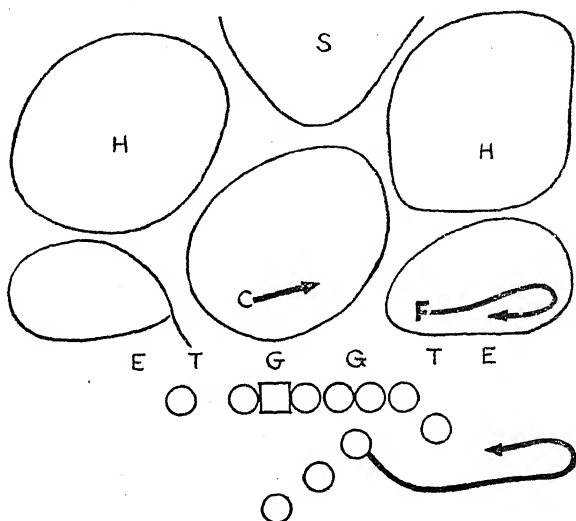


DIAGRAM 24.—Defensive formation against the flanker play with the fullback following the flanker.

defense seems best here although some coaches of national reputation advocate a man-for-man defense in this situation. The man-to-man defense may lead to confusion and place an added burden upon the defensive team. This is especially true if the offense pulls something in the way of a surprise formation or has a back in motion near the goal line.

Flanker Play Defense.—No discussion of defensive football would be complete without including the defense against the flanker or man-in-motion play. With the man in motion to the strong side, the short side of the offensive formation is further weakened. Consequently, the defense can shift one man farther to the strong side in order to adequately defend against the shifted strength of this flanker formation.

The ordinary defense must obviously be changed against the flanker. The end is usually his chief blocking objective and it is important that the strong side defensive end recognize this possibility. He has two methods of defense. In the first one (Diagram 24), he should time his charge from his usual position on the line of scrimmage so that he gets into the offensive backfield before he can be blocked by the flanker. This requires great skill in acquiring the proper timing. In the second method, the end should drop back of the line of scrimmage and go out with the flanker. He should keep directly opposite him as indicated in Diagram 25, cover him man-for-man on pass defense, and

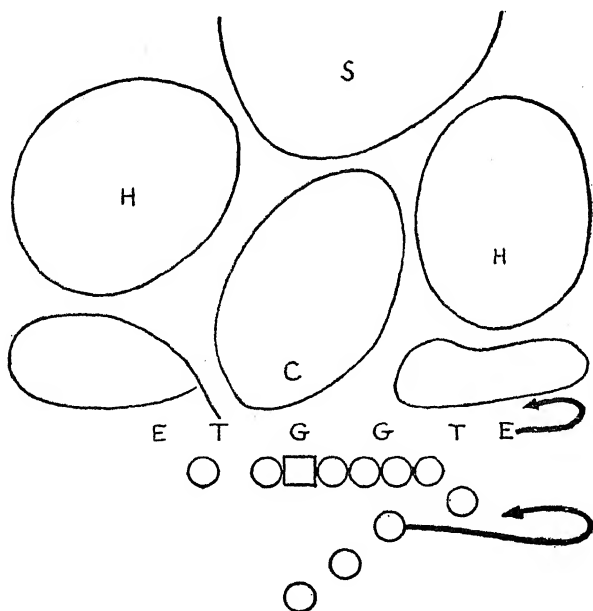


DIAGRAM 25.—Defensive formation against the flanker play with the end following the flanker.

accompany him wherever he goes on the field. If the flanker ignores the end and blocks the fullback, the former should "crash in" and attempt to stop the developing end run or off-tackle smash.

As soon as the flanker starts in motion to one side of the formation, the defensive line and backs should move about one space in that direction. This shift adjusts the defensive strength to the re-adjusted strength of the offensive formation. The attacking team is obviously weaker on reverse plays since only ten men can get into them; therefore, it is sound to correspondingly weaken the defense on the short side.

If the defensive end remains in his usual position, the defensive fullback, *F*, should move out and cover the flanker man-for-man all over the field. As the flanker goes farther out toward the side line, the defensive man covering him should drop back somewhat deeper into defensive territory to prevent the completion of a long pass.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the rule changes which have been made to preserve the balance between the offense and the defense?
2. What are the advantages of the method of teaching backfield tackling proposed in the text?
3. List the standard and special team defenses employed in modern football.
4. Explain the individual play of each lineman and back in the 6-2-2-1 defense. In the 7-1-2-1 defense. In the 5-3-2-1 defense. In the 6-3-2 and 7-2-2 defenses.
5. What are the strength and weaknesses of the defensive formations discussed in the text?
6. How does the play of a backer-up differ behind a six- and a seven-man line?
7. Explain in detail the play of each lineman and back in a goal line defense on the two yard line.
8. How should a team defend against the flanker play?
9. Explain the statement: "Charge first, then look." Also "Look first, then charge."
10. What defensive formation or formations should the average high school coach employ? The average college coach?

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| T F | 1. When a pass is indicated the strong side defensive end should rush the passer. |
| T F | 2. The 6-3-2 defense is weak against wide runs. |
| T F | 3. Defensive halfbacks should charge up fast behind the line of scrimmage, then try to diagnose the play. |
| T F | 4. The 6-2-2-1 defense is strong against forward passes. |
| T F | 5. On third down, twelve yards to gain, the need for a seven-man line is indicated. |
| T F | 6. The defensive line must not permit the offense to strike while it is shifting along the line of scrimmage at right angles to the offensive charge. |
| T F | 7. It is a fundamental principle of defensive play that each player defend his own territory first and then be alert to help elsewhere by converging on the ball or by reinforcing another territory. |

- T F 8. If the offensive play develops into a wide end run the defensive halfback in a 6-2-2-1 formation should come up fast to the outside and keep ahead of the play.
- T F 9. A six-man line operates the same in the 6-3-2 formation as it does in the 6-2-2-1 defense.
- T F 10. The 5-3-2-1 formation is weak against a forward passing attack if the line fails to rush the passer.

CHAPTER 6

FORWARD PASS DEFENSE

The most important element of a forward pass defense is undoubtedly that of *rushing* the passer. More coaches probably agree on the principle that *the best defense against the forward pass is a hard rushing and relentlessly charging line* than almost any other single phase of football strategy. This fact is true regardless of the system employed, i.e., zone, man-for-man, or combination of the two. The passer not only must be *rushed* but *he must be tackled*. The object is: to make him believe his protection is inadequate, to cause him to worry about rushing linemen, and to get him to take his eyes and mind off his eligible pass receivers.

The Zone Defense.—While rushing the passer is important the coach must also decide what system of defense he will employ in his backfield. After analyzing all types and manner of pass defenses against a variety of offensive formations, the coach will find the zone defense best suited to meet all situations. It fits well into the general scheme of team defense and it leaves the backs in position to recover more quickly when a clever surprise play is suddenly launched against them. There is no quarrel with the man-for-man or combination zone-man-for-man defenses. All types of defenses have been used successfully at times by well-known coaches. At other times, however, teams employing them have been ingloriously defeated. This all goes to show the importance of the team personnel in general and the quality of the line in particular. An adequate forward pass defense requires eleven players working together with a high degree of efficient team play. This is usually possible only if directed by an intelligent lineman, such as the center, or the fullback. Such a person should call the plays and co-ordinate the play of his teammates by pre-arranged signals. One well-known coach has his players call "Yoa" when they sense a pass play by the offense.

Pass Defense for the Line.—Since rushing the passer is so important the guards, tackles, ends, and center will be discussed separately.

The Guards.—The first objective of the guards is to make sure no potential pass receiver breaks through the defensive line in their terri-

tory. It is not their *first* duty to rush the passer. The territory of each is immediately in front and a half space to the right and left. Each should watch the offensive back or backs closest to the center. The chief danger is in permitting an opposing back to slip through this territory after he has put on a well executed fake as though retreating to protect the passer. The guard should break through the offensive line and follow this back for a short distance until certain he is protecting the passer. If in doubt, he should tackle the back just as though he were breaking through the line to be a potential receiver. If the guards will do this each and every time, and execute it perfectly, they will remove a lot of pressure from the immediate backers-up.

The second objective of the guards, after they have *first* protected their territory against running and passing plays, is to *rush* the passer and *tackle* him. Some coaches teach one or both guards to drop back after they have first protected their territory. There is an element of danger in this method since the opponents play may appear to be a pass but may develop into a line plunge.

The third objective of the guards is to swing to the side of the field to which the pass has been thrown in the event it is intercepted. Each will then be in a position to block for a teammate.

The Tackles.—The first objective of the tackles is to check a possible receiver. The tackle on the short side should drive back the short side offensive end by using his hands vigorously on the end's shoulders. In this way he should keep the end out of the play as long as possible. A slight checking of a potential pass receiver invariably disrupts the delicate timing of a pass play and often is the direct cause of its failure. This same tackle should then drop back and cover the flat territory as diagrammed. He should make sure no passes are completed on or behind the line of scrimmage in his territory. If no receivers are in his territory, he should drift back as far as possible and slightly to the outside. If the pass is not made in his territory, the tackle should go for the ball and place himself in a position to tackle the receiver, block for a teammate, or receive a lateral pass. (Diagrams 12, 13 and 16).

The strong side tackle, when playing against the wing back and strong-side end, should check the best pass receiver of the two. The defensive backs can then pay more attention to the other receiver. After checking one of the potential pass receivers, the tackle should then *rush* the passer relentlessly and try to *tackle* him, keeping slightly to the outside. He should then drift to the side of the field to which the pass has been thrown in order to be in position to block for a teammate, if the pass is intercepted.

The Ends.—Both ends should *rush* the passer with tremendous speed and relentless determination. The man on the short side should line up as close as possible to his own defensive tackle so he will be in a position to charge quickly into the opposing backfield. He has the best chance of any man on the defense to stop the ordinary pass play by his rushing tactics. The strong-side end is likely to meet more opposition in the form of blockers so he must have the grit and determination to get to the passer by evading the blockers with clever footwork and by use of his hands. Both ends should get across the line of scrimmage several yards before they meet any opposition and they should take advantage of this possibility by concentrating on a fast start. They should go in fast and deep, always protecting the outside, and under no circumstances should they allow the passer to fake a pass and then run around them. To prevent this, the ends should remain on their feet and *tackle* the passer, regardless of the fact that he may have thrown the ball. It is best to tackle the passer chest high. This interferes with his throwing and also his vision in locating potential receivers. This method of tackling high will at least bother most passers to the extent that it will make them inaccurate in their passing.

Some well known and successful coaches use the short-side end to cover the flat territory on his side, while his tackle teammate rushes the passer. This would seem unwise, however, in most situations since the short-side end is in the best possible position to rush the passer. Moreover, he is generally faster and more agile in handling his body, and more accustomed than the tackle to driving in fast under control.

The Center.—When playing in the line, the center should not charge through like the guards and tackles but should use a hand-shiver charge on the player immediately in front of him. In this way he should delay his opponent until he can diagnose the play and prepare to meet it properly. When the situation calls for a long-gainer play and a pass is anticipated, the center should first be prepared to stop a running play directed at his territory. He should then drift back and slightly to the short side to cover the territory ten to fifteen yards over center as indicated in Diagram 12. The center must be particularly alert in diagnosing impending plays, if he is to succeed in the elastic type of defense demanded of him.

When playing behind the line in a 6-2-2-1 defense, he is in a much better position to defend against passes. In this formation he is responsible for the territory approximately fifteen yards beyond center,

and he should play the ball as soon as it is thrown. Inasmuch as he must drive forward to meet a potential running play or move backward to defend against a pass, it is essential that he develop exceptional keenness in looking for "give-aways" or mannerisms by offensive players which indicate the impending play. When expecting a pass he should look *only* for receivers coming from either end of the line. The guards should be held responsible for any backs who break *through* the line. The center should warn them repeatedly of this assignment. With this responsibility removed, he will be in a far better frame of mind to defend his own position intelligently against passes.

Backfield Pass Defense.—Although *rushing* the passer is doubtless the most important single element in a forward pass defense, the line is not always able to do it effectively. The backfield pass defense, therefore, also becomes a matter of great importance.

The Strong Side Backer-Up.—The player occupying the backer-up position on the long side is usually stationed directly behind or back and slightly to either side of the long-side tackle. He, too, must be alert to drive forward to meet running plays and drift to the outside or backward for passes. In the 6-2-2-1 defensive alignment (Diagram 12) he should cover the "flat" territory on the strong side as far as the side lines and about ten yards deep. He must be alert for the clever back, who delays in coming out, but who breaks very fast when he does come. In a passing situation, the backer-up should play five yards back instead of the usual three. This will allow him more leeway because it gives him a chance to leave his position a fraction of a second late and still be in a position to defend his territory effectively. If he is short in stature, as is frequently the case, he should "play safe" by tackling the receiver in the flat zone rather than take a chance on intercepting the pass. Against an alert defense very few teams can complete two successive passes in the flat territory to the strong side and very few teams will attempt to do so.

In the 7-1-2-1 *defensive* (Diagram 13) alignment, the backer-up should stand about five yards back of his line exactly opposite the center of the opposing team's offensive strength. He should cover the territory immediately behind center and about fifteen yards deep. He should first make sure the halfback to his left is aware of the fact that the center is in the line, otherwise the flat to the strong side would be left unguarded.

One important fact must be kept in mind by the defensive backer-up when supporting a seven-man line. It is not necessary for him to reinforce the line as quickly in this formation as would be the case

behind a six-man line. He has more time, therefore, to diagnose the play accurately before "committing" himself and driving in to meet a running play.

If the play develops into a pass, the backer-up should drop back 15 to 18 yards and play the ball. He should look *only* for receivers coming from either *end* of the line and *not* for those coming *through* the line. The latter responsibility is the assignment of the two guards. When the receiver does drive into his area, the backer-up covers him by staying *back* of him and by *playing the ball* as soon as he can determine its course. If the chances seem to be in his favor, he should try for an interception. He must cover the receiver very closely in this area as a great many passes over center are designed as "spot" passes in which the receiver drives for a specific spot. This may be the position occupied by the umpire, and, if so, the backer-up must be especially alert or he will be screened out of the play.

Another play designed especially to deceive the backer-up is the delayed pass to either the short-side end or the long-side end or wing back. In this case, the intended receiver actually blocks the tackle on his side while he counts 1-2-3. He then drives across the line of scrimmage at a 45 degree angle beyond center. This pass is especially difficult to stop when properly executed by clever players.

The Center.—In the 6-2-2-1 defense, the center should station himself about 1½ to 3 yards back of the scrimmage line and facing the space between the short side defensive guard and tackle. When a situation calling for a long-gainer play arises, he should drop back as much as five yards. If the pass develops, he should retreat as far as necessary up to 15-18 yards and cover the center territory. While he constantly warns the guards to stop any possible receivers breaking through the *middle* of the defensive line, he should watch for eligible men coming from either *end* of the line. If two receivers break into his territory, he should cover the deep man, while always alert to the possibility that the other may screen him out of the play. If this situation develops, he should use his hands to ward off the screener and block the ball or tackle the screened receiver. The center, like the fullback, must also avoid running into the umpire, who serves as a target for the over-center passes of the offensive team.

In the 7-1-2-1 defense, the center should use a hand-shiver charge on the lineman immediately in front of him and first defend his territory against running plays. If a pass develops, he should drop back 10 to 15 yards and slightly to the outside and play the ball.

Some coaches consider the center as an extra man in the backfield

and use him as a "roaming" type of extra-defender against special passes that the opponents are known to have.

The Defensive Halfbacks.—The strong side defensive halfback in the 6-2-2-1 defense should cover the deep territory beginning about 8 to 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage and continuing as far back as the ball can be thrown. He should *never* allow a receiver to get behind him at any time. He should *keep between the receiver and the goal line* so he is always in position to intercept the ball if it is thrown into his territory. On long passes deep in his territory he should keep five yards or more beyond the receiver since he will have more time to close in on the ball and the opponent as the distance the ball is thrown increases. If two men should come into his territory, it is obvious that he should play the deep man since he would still have a chance to tackle the short man, if the pass were thrown to him. On the other hand, if the deep man should succeed in receiving the ball behind and beyond him, it would surely result in a long gain and a probable touchdown. At all times, he should play for a safe interception, but in an emergency he should bat down the ball rather than take a foolish chance for a doubtful interception. It is better to play too wide than too near the center of the offensive formation.

In the 7-1-2-1 defense, the strong-side halfback covers the flat territory immediately in front of him and toward the side lines. He is in a most strategic position to intercept passes thrown to the strong-side flat territory and he should be extremely alert to take advantage of this fact. If no receivers come into his territory, he should drop back slightly and aid in protecting the territory over center, *after* the ball has been thrown into that area, but he must always realize that receivers can delay and break into his territory. This very thing frequently occurs. One of the backs "fakes" a block on the end and then suddenly breaks directly into the strong-side flat territory.

The short-side defensive halfback in the 6-2-2-1 defense, acts as a second safety man and permits no receiver to get behind him in his territory. By his territory is meant the area beginning where he is stationed and continuing to the side line and back to the goal line. He should not be held responsible for the short side flat territory as this is the responsibility of the tackle on his side.

In the 7-1-2-1 defense, under no circumstances should he permit a receiver to get behind him. His territory does not change in either formation but it must be emphasized that in the 7-1-2-1 defense, he is definitely a *second* safety man and can expect no help from the true safety man.

The Safety.—Since the safety man is the last barrier between the offensive team and the goal line, he must play in a conservative manner at all times. In the 6-2-2-1 defense, he co-ordinates the backfield and aids in covering the deep territory over center. His chief duty is to play the ball and to assist the other backs. In the 7-1-2-1 formation, he covers the same territory assigned to the strong-side defensive halfback in the 6-2-2-1 defense. This is the territory beginning behind the strong-side defensive halfback and continuing to the goal and side line. The safety man should stand about 35 yards from the ball but should move up 10 to 15 yards immediately after the play develops, if a run is indicated. Usually he should drift slightly to the strong side and this maneuver should be a little more pronounced in the 7-1-2-1 defense.

Fundamentals of Pass Defense.—In order to have a well organized and intelligent team forward pass defense, the coach must first design an adequate formation and then drill his individual players in every phase of that specific defense until they are letter perfect in all its details. It matters not what type of defense is used; when a pass receiver is in a certain position on the field, he must be closely covered man-for-man. The particular formation employed may be called a "zone" defense but when a potential pass receiver drives into a certain "zone" or territory, he must be covered very closely and the "zone" defense immediately resolves itself into a close man-for-man defense. Every type of forward pass defense, therefore, has an element of man-for-man defense in it.

In summary, then, it should be pointed out that certain fundamental principles should guide the defensive team in protecting its territory against forward passes by the offense.

1. The line should *rush the passer* with relentless determination and tackle him if possible. This should prevent him from throwing the ball or cause him to pass it so inaccurately that it is incomplected or intercepted.

2. The line should *check all eligible receivers* before they cross the line of scrimmage. These men can be legally and, therefore, should be blocked out until the ball has actually been passed.

3. Each defensive player should *protect his territory and every receiver should be covered* after he crosses the line of scrimmage.

4. Each defender should *play the man in his territory until the ball is thrown, then he should play the ball.*

5. Each defensive player should attempt to *intercept the pass*, if possible, without taking undue risk of missing the ball and the opponent entirely.

6. Finally, the defensive player should *tackle the receiver*, if the pass is completed.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give reasons why rushing the passer is considered one of the most important elements in a forward pass defense.
2. Explain the respective merits of the man-for-man; the zone; and the combination pass defenses.
3. Explain the duties of the guards in pass defense.
4. List the duties of the tackles in order of importance in defending against the pass.
5. Should the defensive end on the short side rush the passer or cover the flat territory on his side?
6. Explain the pass defensive duties of the center in the 7-1-2-1 and the 6-2-2-1 formations.
7. How does the play of the strong side backer-up in the 6-2-2-1 defense differ from that of the fullback in the 7-1-2-1 formation in defending against the pass?
8. Explain the difference in duties of the two halfbacks in the 6-2-2-1 and 7-1-2-1 formations.
9. What is the most important difference in the assignment of the safety man in the 7-1-2-1 as compared with his duties in the 6-2-2-1 formation?
10. Give the duties and assignments of each man in a man-for-man defense.

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| T F | 1. The short side defensive end should rush the passer. |
| T F | 2. The man-for-man system of pass defense is well adapted to slow-footed defensive backs. |
| T F | 3. The man-for-man forward pass defense is the simplest system for players to learn. |
| T F | 4. Defensive linemen should tackle the passer. |
| T F | 5. It is illegal for defensive linemen to check eligible receivers with their hands. |
| T F | 6. Defensive players should not be taught to intercept forward passes. |
| T F | 7. In the 7-1-2-1 formation the safety man covers the same territory assigned to the strong side defensive halfback in the 6-2-2-1 defense. |
| T F | 8. The defensive halfback on the short side should play as a <i>second</i> safety man in the 7-1-2-1 defense. |
| T F | 9. The defensive center should be held responsible for covering any eligible receivers who break <i>through</i> the line between the defensive tackles. |
| T F | 10. The 5-3-2-1 defensive formation is weak against passes unless the linemen rush the passer effectively. |

CHAPTER 7

OFFENSIVE FOOTBALL

Modern offensive football is featured by an open, "razzle-dazzle" style of play which was formerly thought to be quite unorthodox. Great emphasis is now placed upon forward and lateral passing and other long-gainer plays which result in much scoring. Today a strong defensive team may play an opponent on an even basis for fifty-nine minutes, and then suddenly lose the game by slipping just once defensively against a daring and totally unexpected play by the offense.

A balanced attack should be designed to strike at all openings along the defensive line from the same formation. No "give-away" signs must be in evidence to permit diagnosis of the play by the defense. These are very difficult to avoid because of the eagerness of members of the offensive team. Leaning, looking in the direction of the intended play, and many other mannerisms are usually in evidence to aid the defense. In addition to running plays, passes, which at their inception look like the running attack, must be incorporated into the offense.

Offensive Fundamentals.—Certain factors such as speed, power, deception, and blocking, should be considered fundamental to offensive football.

Speed is one of the first requisites of a good offense. Power is a close second. Deception and variety of attack are also very important. When these are combined in the running attack, it is generally difficult to stop. Imagine a backfield composed of Thorpe, Grange, Nagurski, and Friedman and you have what it takes to develop a powerful and diversified running and passing attack, coupled with great kicking. Nagurski had the power and essential speed in a big man. Thorpe was unexcelled in all-around play and was a great kicker. Grange has never had an equal as a long-gainer or "climax" runner. Friedman was the passer and signal caller par excellence. The Notre Dame team of the Four Horsemen era was not a big team but was noted for its speed, deception, and intelligent playing. An attack with a powerful plunger in a threatening position to tear apart the middle of a line, and a fast "climax" runner available to run either flank places the defensive team at a disadvantage. This is even more pronounced



Keystone (FPG)

A LINE PLUNGE: Note the grip of the ball with the right hand, while the left is held ready for a straight-arm.

TACKLING (Continued)



"Pic" (FPG)

OFFENSIVE FORMATION BEFORE A SHIFT: Note the offensive stance of the four men already on the line, and the hands-on-the-knees position of the backs and other linemen.

when the line plunger handles the ball on practically every play. Obviously, it is too idealistic to expect any high school or college team to have such a backfield as the one mentioned above but the coach can develop what he has in the way of offensive material with these four men as a standard.

The Importance of Blocking.—It has often been said that skillful blocking is the essence of offensive football. Without it the attack is futile. No team can hope to win against an equal, if it cannot block. It is, however, unquestionably the most difficult skill to develop in players. Long and patient practice is absolutely essential. Rockne was one of the first great coaches to stress blocking above everything else. No player, no matter how much he excelled in a specialty, could play on his teams unless he was able to execute his blocking assignments skillfully. Meticulous detail in teaching blocking was probably the most important single reason why he was so successful. Many of the most successful present-day coaches are noted for the stress which they place on blocking. The development of this important fundamental doubtless carries their teams through many a difficult situation in close games. The successful coach today considers it a paramount failure for one of his players to miss a blocking assignment, and all members of the squad have this fact instilled into them at all times.

It is difficult to describe the various types of blocks because of the existing confusion in terminology. Coaches do not always agree on the best block to use in a given situation. Even when the same block is employed by two coaches, each is likely to call it by a different name.

The Shoulder Block.—The most common block in use today is the running shoulder block. It is probably the easiest to teach and execute, and, frequently it enables the blocker to remain on his feet and do additional blocking downfield. In addition, it emphasizes *position*, which is the most important element in blocking.

Position in Blocking.—The blocker can get into the proper position in three ways, i.e., by the design of the offensive play; by keeping between the tackler and the ball; and by the maneuvering of the ball-carrier. Plays should be designed so the blocker is situated in the formation to advantageously carry out his assignment. This is well illustrated by the play in which the offensive guard on the strong side "pulls out" of the line to *block out* the defensive tackle on a "mouse-trap" play. He is in an advantageous position, the instant he pulls out of the line, to place a running shoulder block on the defensive tackle as soon as the latter takes one or two steps across the line of

scrimmage. This block from the side is much easier to execute than one from directly in front.

The second important method in getting into position for blocking is for the blocker to so maneuver that he places himself *between the tackler and the ball*. Most blockers fail in this elementary fundamental, particularly when aiming at a moving target. An example of maneuvering into position for blocking is shown when the strong-side guard pulls out of the line to block the defensive fullback. The latter is a moving target, and is adept in sidestepping the blocker and using his hands. The offensive guard should anticipate such defensive movements and should maintain proper balance in order to maneuver himself into proper position to do an efficient blocking job.

The third factor in successful blocking depends upon the ball-carrier. Strange as it may seem to the average spectator, *the ball-carrier makes the blocker*. The runner should maneuver the tackler into the blocker by feinting in one direction and then by *breaking fast* in the opposite direction as the tackler hesitates or is caught off-balance. This maneuver is executed by means of a cross-over step similar to that used by the ice skater in making a right angle turn. If planning to feint left and run to the right, the runner should step with his right foot in the direction he is feinting and then cross-over with his left foot. He should point his left toe in the direction he wishes to go, then should break fast.

The Cross-Body Block.—The cross-body block has been described under Offensive Line Play. This is an important block and can be mastered with practice. It is more of a passive block and it is important for the blocker to keep his feet and “crab” into the tackler when contact has been made. Frequently the blocker can swing into a cross-body block from most any other type of contact. If he misses the shoulder block, he still may be able to execute the cross-body block or some other type of block.

Other Types of Blocks.—While the shoulder block and the cross-body block are the two best methods of backfield blocking, other means of interference are sometimes employed. The shoulder block is sometimes used as a running, or check block, while the cross-body block may become a roll if the interferer leaves his feet.

Angle Blocking.—Some of our best known coaches teach players to block from an angle whenever possible. (Diagrams 51 and 61). It is believed that the blocker can get more drive from an angle than he can if he places his body in a straight line between the tackler and the ball. This is called angle blocking. Regardless of the type of

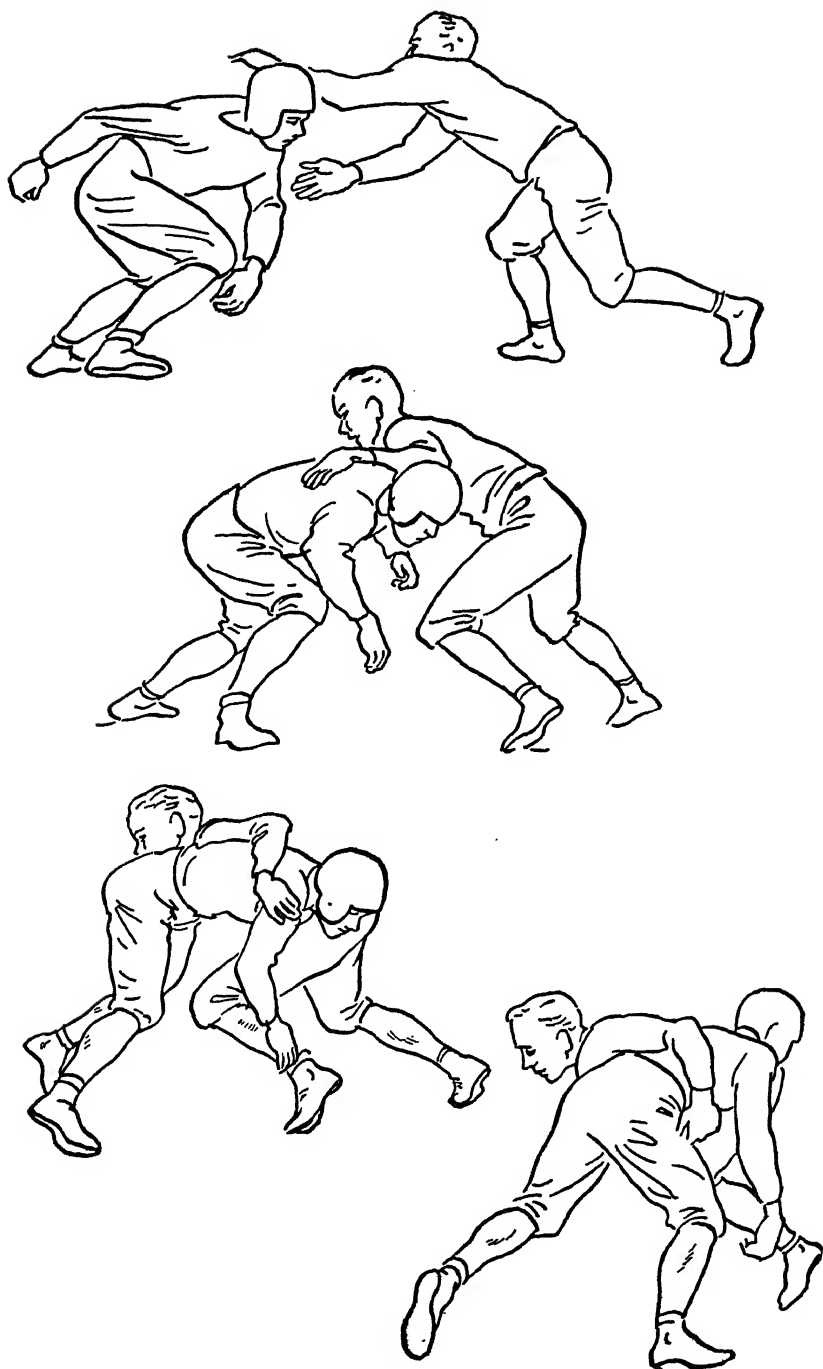


FIG. 19.—The end is “boxing” the tackle in.

block taught, however, about fifty per cent of the blocks must necessarily be angle blocks. This is especially true of downfield blocking where the blockers must "take-out" the defense in any manner possible. The time element is too small to permit orthodox blocking under these conditions.

There are other types of blocks in use today. Many coaches insist upon their players making a certain block for certain situations. When the material is available and can be taught these specific blocking assignments under given conditions, it is unquestionably best. It is not efficient coaching, however, to teach a player a cross-body block when he is incapable of doing it. It would be far better to have a player perfect a running shoulder block than to have him fail to execute a cross-body block each time he tried it.

In addition to speed, power, deception, and blocking, it is highly important that the offense start from one or more of the standard offensive formations.

Backfield Offensive Fundamentals.—Modern offensive football requires special abilities on the part of backfield players in stance, starting, blocking, eluding tacklers, bucking the line, as well as in handling the ball.

Backfield Stances.—Every back should learn to assume a position behind the line which is not only comfortable, but one which aids in quick starting in any direction and at the same time avoids "telegraphing" the nature and direction of the impending play.

The Semi-Upright Stance.—While the signals are being given and before any shift takes place, the backs may stand in a semi-upright position with feet well spread, and with the hands on the knees.

The Semi-Crouch Stance.—After the shift and while waiting for the center to snap the ball, the backs may assume a semi-crouch position with feet well spread, and with the forearms resting across the thighs just above the knees.

The Crouch Stance.—Some players and coaches prefer the crouch or modified sprint start with one hand on the ground. This position assists the plunger or blocker to start with a quick and powerful drive.

Choosing a Stance.—The semi-crouch position is preferable for ease of ball handling and starting backward or laterally. The crouch stance, on the other hand, adds to the deception of the attack by aiding the center in keeping his pass low. It is also possible to drive ahead more powerfully from this position to buck the line or block an opponent.

Regardless of the position chosen, each back should assume the

same one at all times. Meanwhile, he should keep his eyes on the ball in readiness for the start.

The Start.—It is important that the weight be evenly distributed to permit a start in any direction.

The Step with the Near Foot.—When the halfback is playing rather close to the line he should step first with the near foot, i.e., the one on the side in the direction of the run. This places him in a better position to receive a short pass without getting his knees in the way of the ball.

The Cross-Over Step.—When the back is playing more than 4 or 5 yards behind the line, he should step-over first with the far foot, i.e., the foot on the opposite side from the direction of the run. This places the back in the same position to receive the pass as described above with feet and knees well apart, since he receives the ball on the second step.

Footwork in the Spinner.—Modern backfield play demands expert footwork in executing spinner plays. The latter may call for a quarter, half, three-quarter or full spin; a full spin plus a quarter, half, or three-quarter spin; or even two complete turns. The spin may be made in place, or by stepping forward, backward, or laterally. The *spin-in-place* is used principally on fake reverses. The *forward step and spin* gets the play to the line faster and is used primarily for bucks through the line. The *lateral step and spin* is used to advantage in reversing and fake reversing. Occasionally, the play may require a *backward step and spin*. Regardless of the type of spin, the man doing the turning should bend over in a semi-crouch position with his weight on the balls of his feet. (Diagrams 60 to 65). A skilled back will keep the ball cleverly concealed at all times.

Line Plunging.—The line plunger should be big, rugged and fast. He should hold the ball in both hands until through the line, and should drive forward with all the speed and power at his command. He should run low, but with his eyes open and looking ahead.

Eluding Tacklers in the Open Field.—Sudden changes of speed and direction are essential if the ball-carrier is to be successful in eluding tacklers in the open field. He may employ several methods of cutting back, of reversing his field, and of weaving. These include the change-of-pace, the cross-over step, the side-step, the pivot and reverse, and a half hurdle or lay-out. Doubtless every boy who plays an end or backfield position can become adept at one or more of these techniques. If he has loose hip action, he may succeed with the cross-over step. If he is fast, he should employ the change-of-pace.

If he is a line plunger, he may use the pivot and reverse after he drives through the line.

The Change-of-Pace.—The boy who is gifted with great speed can use the change-of-pace effectively. He should run at a moderately fast pace as he approaches a tackler and then put on a tremendous burst of speed just as the opponent leaves his feet or attempts to drive in for the tackle. At the same time, he should straight-arm his adversary and pull his hips and legs away.



FIG. 20.—Eluding a tackler in the open field by means of a cross-over step.

The Cross-Over Step.—The ball-carrier should be able to execute the cross-over step, or the side-step, if necessary, in the open field. In the cross-step he should feint slightly when he approaches the opponent as though he planned to run to one side by stepping somewhat in that direction. This feint should be followed immediately by a cross-over step with the other foot and a dash to the opposite side of the tackler. (Figure 20.)

The Side-Step.—The side-step should be used in eluding an opponent when the stride does not permit the cross-step and vice versa. In this method, the ball-carrier feints to run to one side of

the tackler with the near or forward foot. This feint should be followed by a wide diagonal stride to the side with the other foot.

The Pivot and Reverse.—The pivot or complete turn is most effective when used by a line plunger just after he breaks through the line of scrimmage. It may also be employed, however, in the open field. The ball-carrier should straight-arm his opponent, pivot on the near or inside foot, make a three-quarter turn, and drive off in the new direction. He should come out of the turn in a low position to avoid injury.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How has offensive football changed in the last fifteen or twenty years?
2. What is meant by the statement "Blocking is the essence of offensive football"?
3. What is meant by position in blocking? What three factors assist the blocker in getting into proper position?
4. Explain angle blocking.
5. What are the three backfield stances described in the text?
6. In starting, when should he back step first with the near foot, and when should he execute a cross-over step with the far foot?
7. Explain the footwork employed in handling the ball on a spinner play.
8. Explain the technique of executing the various steps employed in eluding a tackler in the open field, i.e., cross-over step, side-step, pivot and reverse, change-of-pace, etc.

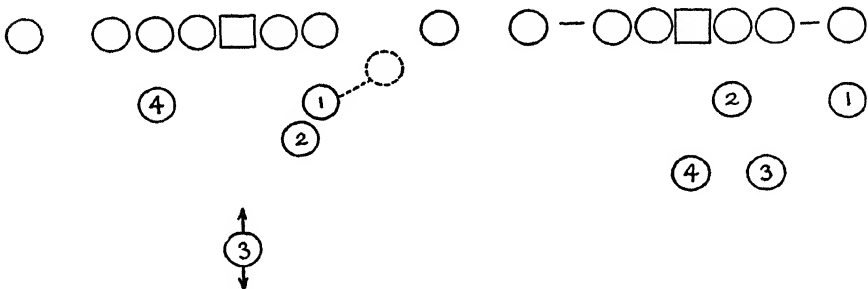
TEST QUESTIONS

- T F 1. Effective blocking is the essence of offensive football.
- T F 2. The semi-upright backfield stance, described in the book, should be employed by the back who handles the ball on a spinner play.
- T F 3. When the halfback who is playing close to the line starts laterally behind the line of scrimmage, he should step first with the near foot.
- T F 4. On spinner plays, the lateral step and spin is used primarily in getting the plunger through on line bucks as fast as possible.
- T F 5. The change-of-pace should be taught to slow backs as an effective method of eluding tacklers in the open field.

CHAPTER 8

OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS AND PLAYS

Offensive Formations.—There are four fundamental offensive formations, or variations of them, in rather wide use today. They are known as punt formation, the Notre Dame balanced line and shifting backfield formation, the single wing back formation, and the double wing back formation. The line may be balanced or unbalanced in each of these attacks but the punt and Notre Dame alignments



Four Standard Offensive Formations.

DIAGRAM 26.—Punt formation, balanced line. DIAGRAM 27.—Notre Dame formation, balanced line.

commonly employ a balanced line, while the single and double wing back formations invariably include an unbalanced two-four line.

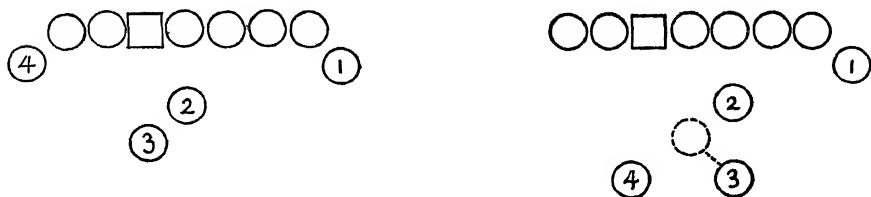
The Punt Formation.—Punt formation is well adapted to kicking and forward and lateral passing. On the other hand, it is somewhat weaker for bucking and running since the center is in the middle of the line and none of the backs are flanking the defensive ends or tackles. (Diagram 26).

Notre Dame Formation.—The balanced line and box backfield alignment is a variation of the single wing back formation. It is well adapted to runs, sweeps, bucks, and passing but is relatively weak on the short side. (Diagram 27).

Double Wing Back Formation.—Double wing back formation, commonly known as the Warner formation, is designed to spread the defense. It features deception as well as power and its strength is well

balanced. On the other hand, it is not especially well adapted to a passing attack and its greatest weakness lies in the time required to get many of its plays to the line of scrimmage. (Diagram 28).

Single Wing Back Formation.—The single wing back formation, with its many variations, is probably the most commonly used attack. It concentrates its power on the strong side and is relatively weak to the short side. Some of this weakness may be overcome, however, by “splitting” the short side end and by playing the “tail” back behind the short side tackle. (Diagram 29).



Four Standard Offensive Formations (*Continued*).

DIAGRAM 28.—The Double-Wing Back formation, unbalanced line.

DIAGRAM 29.—The Single-Wing Back formation, unbalanced line.

Other Formations.—Other formations include the old T formation, the balanced line and balanced box formation in the backfield, flanker plays, triple wing back alignments, and various spread formations.

The Choice of a Formation.—The formation or formations employed obviously should be the ones best known by the coach and best suited to the available players.

A Cycle of Plays.—Years ago it was not unusual to see teams using a variety of formations and plays which had no relation to each other. In contrast to this unorganized and comparatively ineffective attack, is the modern series or cycle of plays launched from one formation. Each play is one of a series that fits into the cycle. All start the same from the one formation but each ends differently.

A cycle should include a complete repertoire of plays designed to strike each of the spaces or holes between opponents on the defense. Finally, the ideal attack or series should utilize plays which capitalize on the individual abilities and characteristics of each member of the team. A complete cycle of plays should include:

1. Straights, i.e., plunges.
2. Slants, i.e., plunges and split bucks.
3. Angles, i.e., off-tackle runs and reverses; cut-backs, and in-and-out or out-and-in plays.

4. Sweeps, i.e., wide end runs and wide reverses.
5. Forward passes, i.e., long and short passes.
6. Lateral passes, i.e., behind and beyond the line of scrimmage.
7. Kicks, i.e., punts, quick kicks, place kicks, and drop kicks.
8. Spinners, i.e., quarter, half, and full spins; or even two full spins or double spins.
9. Quick deception, i.e., quarterback sneaks, quick opening plunges, quick line-up or series plays.
10. Delayed deception, i.e., spinners, followed by a plunge, run, or pass; fake plunge, run or kick followed by a pass; fake pass followed by a plunge, run, or kick; fake kick followed by a pass or run, etc.
11. Mouse-trap plays. (Diagrams 31 to 65).

In the early days of football the *straight* or plunge play was the most important part of the attack. When the rules permitted three downs in which to gain five yards, only one and two-thirds yards were needed on each down. It was possible to make this yardage by plunging. Hence, the mass and bone-crushing play of former days.

Under the present rules it is difficult, if not impossible, to make ten yards in four downs by plunging alone. Angle plays, wide runs, passes, reverses, and double reverses are essential if a sustained attack is to be developed. The quarterback must learn that straights and slants are surer of gaining some yardage but it usually will be small yardage. On the other hand, the long-gainer type of angle, sweep, reverse, and pass plays are less likely to gain, yet if they are successful, they go for great yardage.

The Single Wing Back Formation.—The formation (Diagram 31) described below is an unbalanced two-four line and single wing back alignment in which the short side end is spread and the backs are in box formation.

The fundamental principle in any running play is to throw unexpected offensive strength at a certain point along the defensive line before the defense can shift its strength to meet the maneuver. The offensive players know exactly where and when each play is to strike. The defense, on the other hand, must be prepared for any type of play.

Characteristics Needed for Each Position.—Modern football position play has become highly specialized and each of the eleven offensive positions should be filled by a player with the necessary characteristics.

The *running back* should be a fast "climax" or open-field runner and a dependable passer. If he can kick too, so much the better. The *fullback* should be a basketball player, adept at spinning, handling the

ball, and faking. Obviously, he must be a powerful line plunger, a deadly blocker and defensive player. The number 2 or *blocking back* should be primarily what the name implies, the best blocker on the team. The *wing back* position requires a player who is very fast on reverses and highly skilled in boxing or blocking the defensive tackle. The *two ends* should be great blockers and expert pass catchers. Ideally, they are big men and the better blocker should play the strong-side position. The guards and tacklers should be

- = The ball-carrier or passer.
- ⊙ = An interferer.
- ⦿ = Handles the ball on a play.
- = Path of player.
- ↻ = A full spinner.
- ↷ = A half spinner.
- └ = A block.
- ≡ = Two men blocking an opponent.
- = A forward or lateral pass.
- ↘ = A check block, followed by continuing on downfield.

DIAGRAM 30.—Key to the symbols used in the diagrams.

chosen for their defense and blocking and their ability to run interference. The *running guard*, particularly, should be noted for his speed and special blocking ability. The *center* must be an accurate passer to instill confidence in the backs. Obviously, he too must be a skilled blocker and defensive player.

The Off-Tackle Play.—The off-tackle play from the single wing back formation (Diagram 31) described below is fundamentally sound and is probably the strongest running play in football. When all eleven offensive players synchronize their movements in carrying out their individual assignments, the developing play is very compact. The ball-carrier should run low behind the blocking linemen. They should act as a screen and make it more difficult for the defensive players to accurately diagnose the play. The man with the ball should control his movements when breaking through the hole in order to evade the close backers-up. This may be done by a sudden burst of speed designed to tear him loose from a partial tackle or carry him past any defensive man.

In this offensive formation, the number 3 and 4 backs should line up exactly four and one-half yards back of the scrimmage line. Additional distance merely adds looseness to the formation and prevents the deception or screening of the ball-carrier by the blockers. When

the formation is too loose, it gives the defense an added chance to make tackles back of the scrimmage line and permits a quicker diagnosis of the developing play. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on compactness of running plays even though some coaches may

argue that they can be piled up easily by smashing ends and tackles. If the ball-carrier is clever to any degree, he can easily avoid the possible pile-up and the blockers can be trained to smother the crashing defensive players.

This off-tackle play may be classified as a power play and as a long-gainer play. When used in the latter capacity, the cleverest and fastest back should carry the ball. When a short gain is needed, the

most powerful runner has more than an even chance of making the necessary yardage.

If the play is to go as indicated, the wing-back and strong-side end should block the defensive left tackle *out*. The pressure or shoulder block is put on by the end. This turns the defensive tackle to the outside while the wing-back acts as a post-blocker. The offensive right tackle should drive the defensive left guard in toward the center and stay with him for a count of about 1-2-3. The block applied should be vigorous and executed with great speed and drive. The guard toward the long side should pull out, and drive through the hole, which is automatically opened between the right end and right tackle by reason of their blocking assignments. The guard's objective should be the defensive fullback. The guard next to the center, that is, the guard toward the short side, should remain in the line and block the opposing guard playing on his own center. He should then go down-field in the direction of the play and try for the safety man. He should remain in the line long enough to enable the center to make a perfect pass without the added pressure of cross-checking. This permits the center to make his pass, and then block the defensive center, who will be driving in the direction of the hole to prevent any cut-back tactics by the ball-carrier. The short-side tackle should pull out and follow the running guard through the hole. He looks

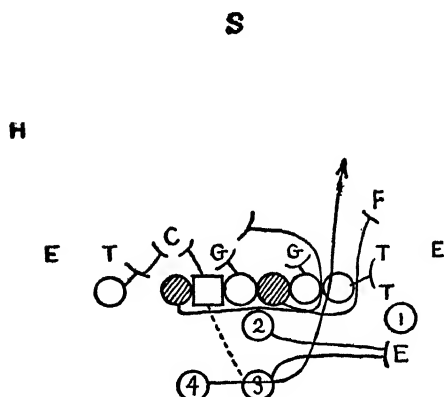


DIAGRAM 31.—An off-tackle run from single wing back formation.

first for any defensive lineman who may have driven through the line and then for the defensive fullback in the event the running guard has missed his blocking assignment. If the defensive fullback is taken out by the running guard, the latter should cut back and block the defensive center. The short-side end should cross-check the position vacated by the running tackle. He should aim for the left thigh of the short-side defensive tackle and thrust his body across in front of him by swinging into a cross-body block or by driving directly across the path of the tackle and continuing downfield as an interferer. The latter technique is usually sufficient unless the opposing tackle is a fast charging player, who makes a specialty of stopping this type of play from the rear. In this event, it may be advisable for the center to block out the defensive tackle and the short-side end to help on the defensive center.

The offensive assignments described above are sound and may be changed to overcome unexpected defensive strength by one or more individual defensive linemen. If the offensive right tackle, for example, cannot block the left defensive guard alone, the guard next to him should double-team with him, while the guard next to the center pulls out. This puts added pressure on the center, however, for he must first make his pass and then cross-check or fill the position left vacant by the close guard. The end must also change his assignment and cross-check for the short-side tackle pulling out of the line. Most coaches operate their off-tackle play in this fashion.

Backs numbers 2 and 3 double team on the end by using a running shoulder block. To make the block more compact and to give added power, number 3 back should step in toward the number 2 with his left foot while the number 2 back runs in a straight line for the end. By the time they reach their objective, they are shoulder to shoulder and should duck under the arms of the defensive end, gain contact with him, and drive him straight back.

The ball-carrier should receive the ball about one full step ahead of his original position or about where the number 3 back was standing before the ball was snapped. Most coaches, who use this formation, teach the ball-carrier to step first with the right foot so he is in proper position to retrieve a bad pass from center. He should take three steps towards the defensive end, and *veer in* slightly towards the scrimmage line. This places him immediately back of the running tackle who leads him through the hole. He should so control his speed that he maneuvers the defensive fullback into the running guard or tackle. As he breaks through the hole, he should run slightly to

the left of the fullback. He should follow with a cross step, put on full speed, and drive at almost a 90 degree angle to the right. If he succeeds in getting past the fullback, he should attempt to pick up any possible interferers, who may have carried out their original assignments, and who are now ready to do some downfield mopping-up for the man with the ball.

The Cut-Back Play.—The cut-back play starts in exactly the same way as the off-tackle play but it ends differently. It is designed for use when the opponents over-shift to the strong side to stop end runs or wide off-tackle plays. When Diagram 32 is examined closely, it will be noted that the play hits the same hole as the regular off-tackle play illustrated in Diagram 31 with some variations in assignments.

Assuming that the defensive line has over-shifted one man to the strong side to stop the regular off-tackle play and end run that has

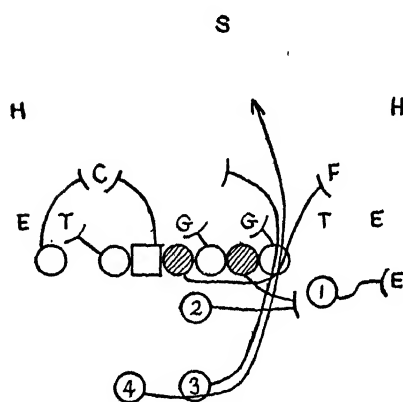


DIAGRAM 32.—A cut-back play from single wing back formation.

been gaining consistently, the quarterback should call the cut-back play. The wing back should block out the end alone. The strong-side end should block the defensive left guard *in*. The strong-side offensive tackle should pull out and mouse-trap or block out the defensive left tackle as he charges into the offensive backfield. He should be assisted by the number 2 back. These two blockers are so placed by their positions in the formation that they are in a wonderful position to execute this block. The long guard

should block the defensive right guard *in* while the close guard should pull out and block the defensive fullback. The offensive center should make his pass and go immediately for the defensive center. The weak-side tackle should block out the defensive right tackle and the short-side end should go for the defensive center.

The number 3 back should lead the play as diagrammed and block the defensive center, if he has not been taken, or lead the play up the middle. The ball-carrier should follow in the exact footsteps of number 3 back, and break to either side when the opportunity arises. The number 3 back should move slowly until the running

guard goes through the hole. He should then fall into position and follow in the exact footsteps of the running guard.

The standard off-tackle play outside or inside the defensive tackle, the cut-back run *inside* the defensive tackle, and the wide end run or sweep play are examples of plays designed to take advantage of any weakness which may develop in the opponent's line. When these three plays are called at the opportune time and executed in the proper manner, they should invariably gain ground. They must, however, be alternated: with various types of reverse and short side plays, in-

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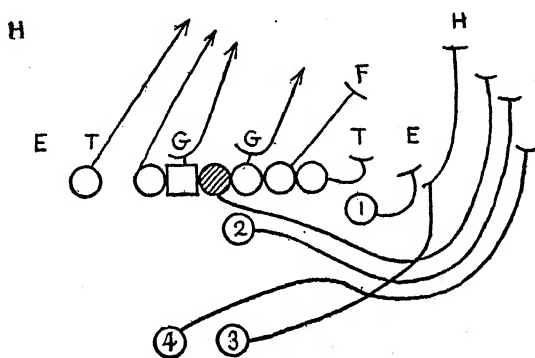
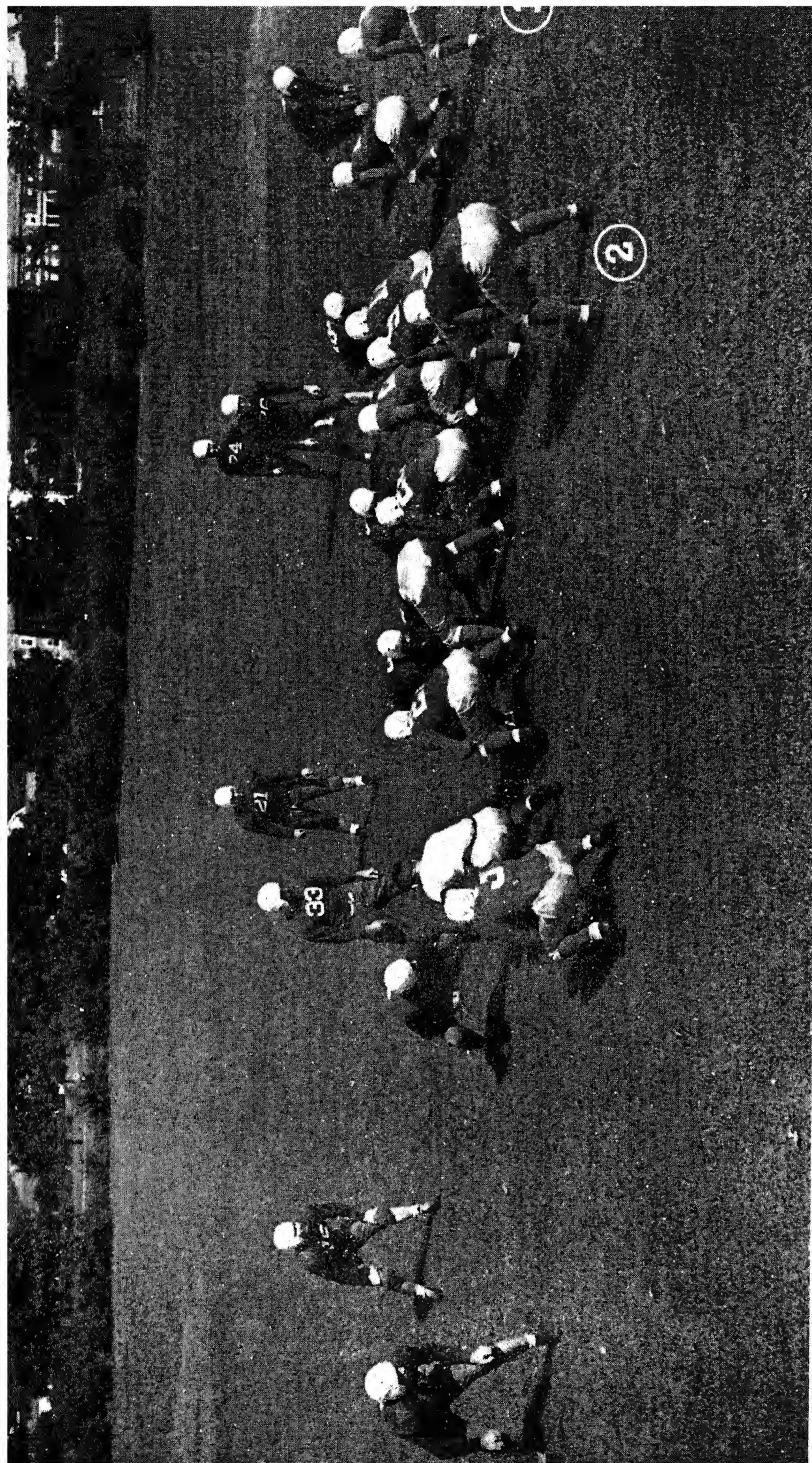


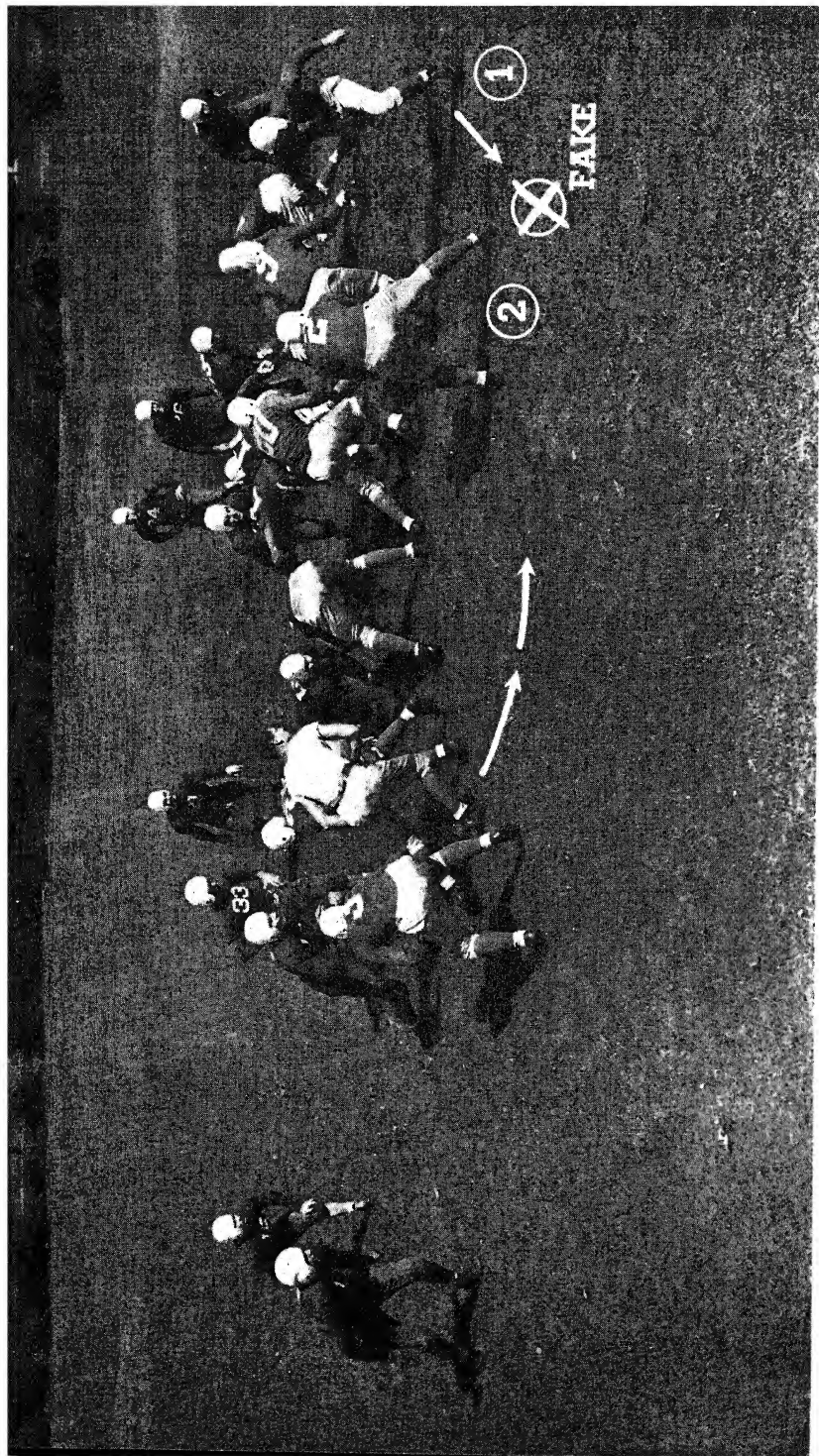
DIAGRAM 33.—An end run or sweep play.

side and outside the short side defensive tackle and end; with plays which start like runs, but which develop into quick line plunges or delayed spinner bucks; with forward and lateral pass plays; and with quick kicks and regular punts. A series or cycle of these plays is diagrammed for a single wing back formation.

A Balance Offensive.—In the ideal attack, there is a nice balance between running plays to the strong side and plays to the short side. Without this balance the defense could over-shift to the strong side and largely ignore the short side. If Team A, for example, had well developed plays to the strong side and comparatively weak ones to the short side, a smart defensive team would surely over-shift to the strong side. With the short-side defensive end driving in fast, the short side tackle could safely drop back two yards behind the line of scrimmage. This alignment would permit the defensive fullback to shift outside his own defensive strong-side tackle. The defensive



DOUBLE WING BACK FORMATION: Note the three-point offensive stance of the lineman and the left wingback, and the forearm-on-thighs stance of the other backs. Observe, also, the stance of each defensive lineman.



KLING (Continued)

DOUBLE WING BACK FORMATION: Number 2 gets the ball from center and will fake giving it to Number 1. The left end (in white) and the right guard are pulling out of the line. Note the

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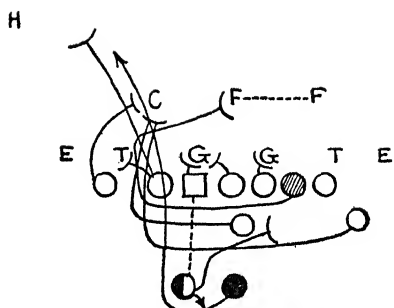


DIAGRAM 37.—A reverse inside tackle.

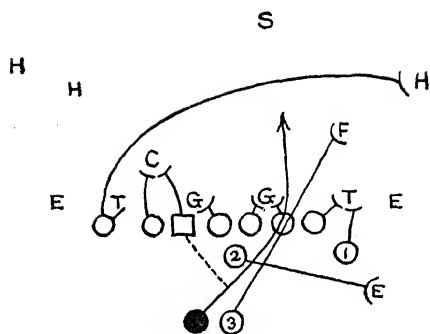


DIAGRAM 38.—A slant buck inside tackle.

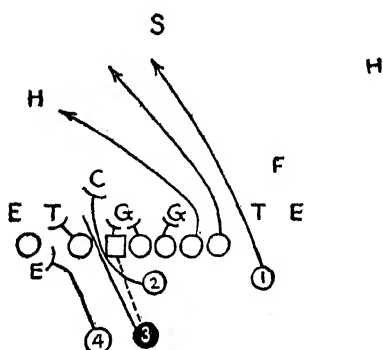


DIAGRAM 39.—A short side buck between the defensive guard and tackle.

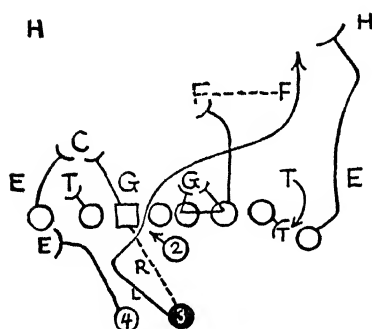


DIAGRAM 40.—A "mouse-trap" play in which the blocking back (2) "mouse-traps" the short side guard.

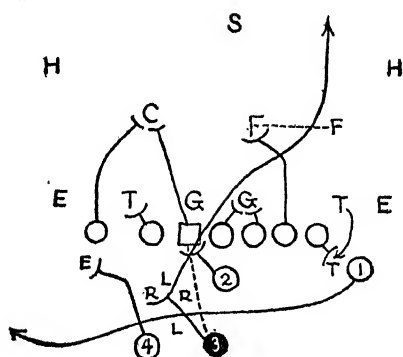


DIAGRAM 41.—A fake reverse.

center, likewise could move over in the direction of the fullback. Moreover, the entire defensive line could safely shift one full man to

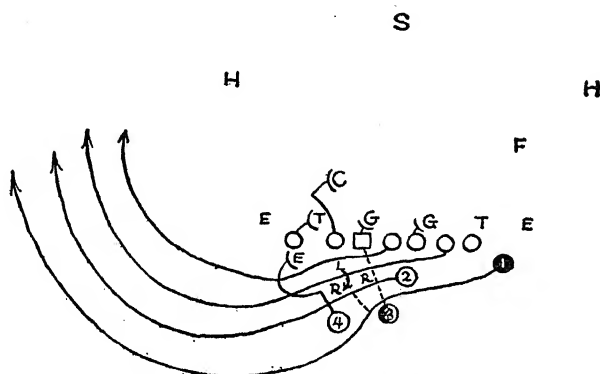


DIAGRAM 42.—A wide reverse.

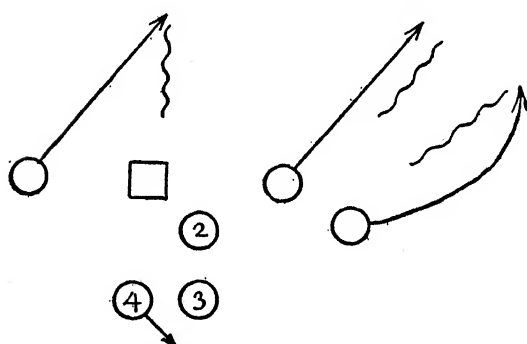


DIAGRAM 43.—A quick, short, 45-degree angle pass.

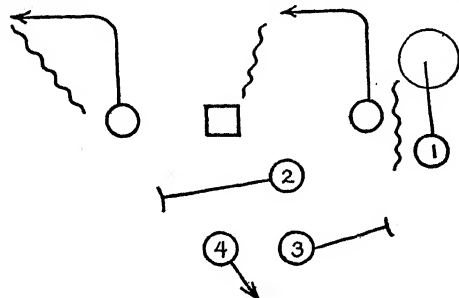


DIAGRAM 44.—A short pass to a receiver 8 yards down field and out to the short side.

the strong side. Such an over-shifted defense would enable a weak defensive team to stop a rather powerful strong-side attack unsupported by short-side plays.

What has been stated about the need for balance between strong- and short-side running plays, applies with equal importance regarding the running and passing attack. It is imperative, also, that there

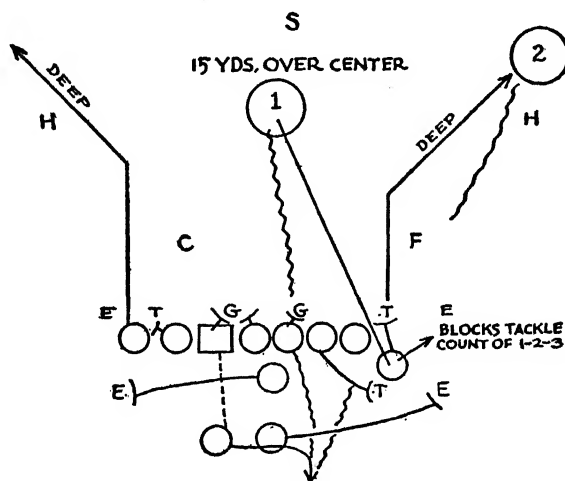


DIAGRAM 45.—A delayed pass 15 yards over the center of the line.

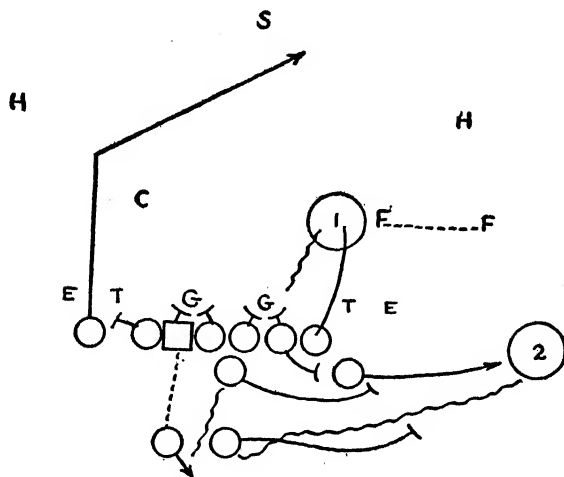


DIAGRAM 46.—An optional pass to the end or wing back.

be a nice balance between the running and passing game. If the pass attack is strong, the secondary defense will be forced back. This, in turn, will aid the running plays. Conversely, if the running attack is powerful, the secondary will be forced to come up to stop it, thereby

weakening the pass defense. The quarterback, who is fortunate enough to direct a team equipped with powerful running plays and deceptive forward passes, should find it comparatively easy to outmaneuver the opposing defense.

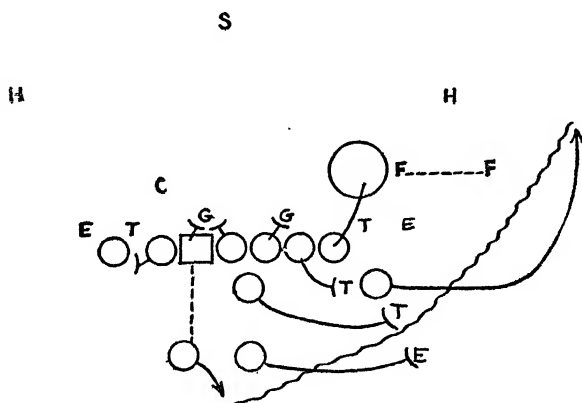


DIAGRAM 47.—A pass to the wing back who must outrun *F*.

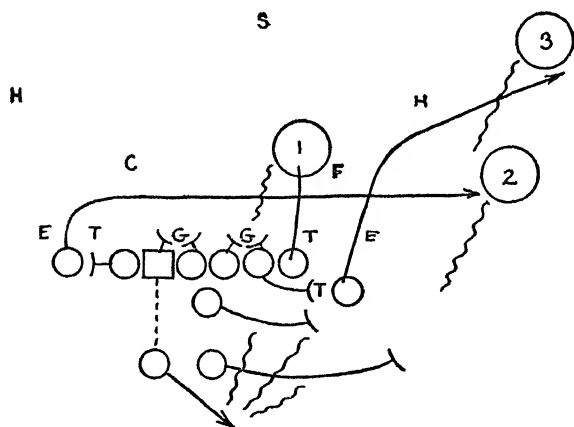


DIAGRAM 48.—A pass to the short side end.

The Pass Offense.—The first fundamental of pass defense is to rush the passer. Hence, the first fundamental of pass offense is to protect the passer. (Diagrams 43 to 49; also 59 and 60).

Protecting the Passer.—Regardless of the passer's mechanical ability he cannot be very accurate, if he is rushed to such an extent that he fails to get set or find an open receiver. On the other hand, if the passer is not rushed, he should complete a high percentage of his at-

tempted passes. This fact was well illustrated during the 1937 season when the Washington Redskins with Sammy Baugh passing won the championship of the National Professional Football League by defeating both the New York Football Giants and the Chicago Bears

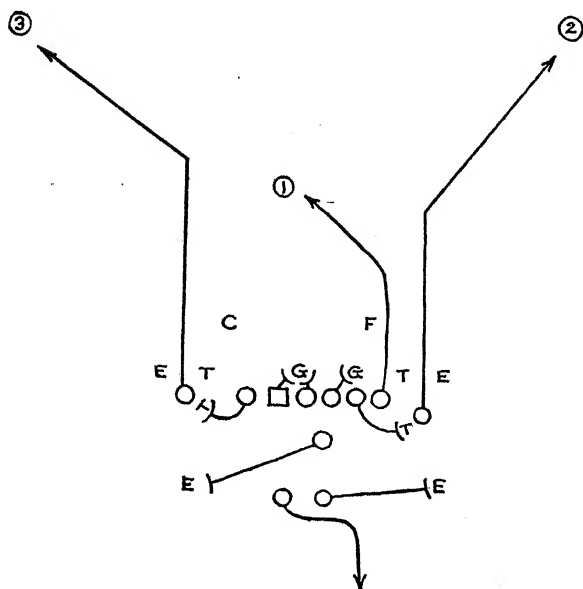


DIAGRAM 49.—A long, gambling type of pass requiring strong protection for the passer.

A Series of Plays from Single Wing Back Formation with the Tail Back Handling the Ball.

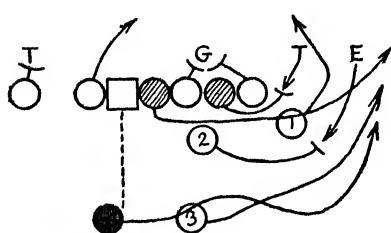


DIAGRAM 50.—An in-and-out end sweep after a feint to run off-tackle.

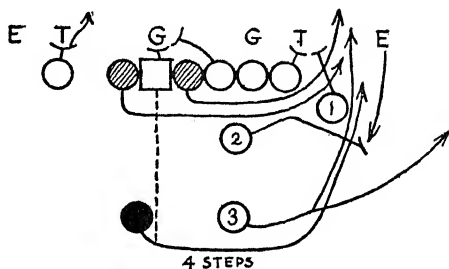


DIAGRAM 51.—An off-tackle out-and-up play with angle blocking on the end.

on successive Sundays. A big factor in the Redskin attack was a wonderful passing attack, made possible because the Giant and Bear *five-man lines* failed to rush the passer. The Philadelphia Eagles won their only league victory against the Washington team. This was

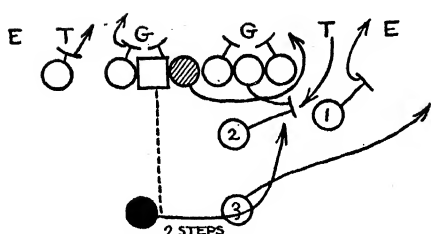
Plays with Tail Back Handling the Ball (*Continued*).

DIAGRAM 52.—A "mouse-trap" cut-back play inside tackle.

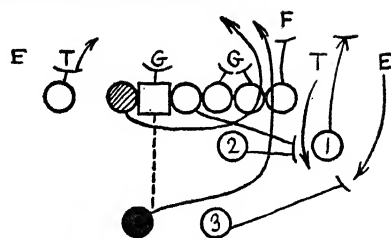


DIAGRAM 53.—Another "mouse-trap" cut-back play showing a variation in blocking assignments.

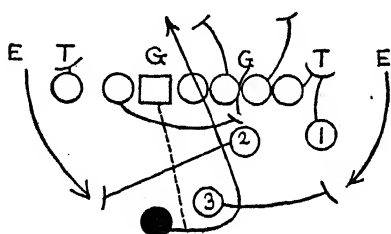


DIAGRAM 54.—A cut-back inside of a "mouse-trapped" guard.

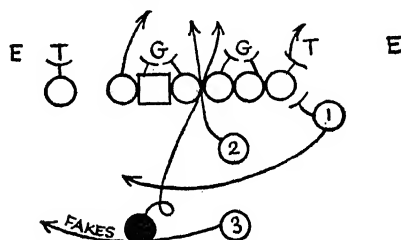


DIAGRAM 55.—A spinner plunge after a fake to the short side.

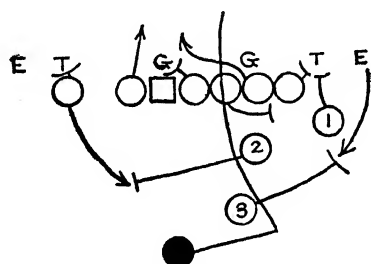


DIAGRAM 56.—Cross blocking for a cut-back.

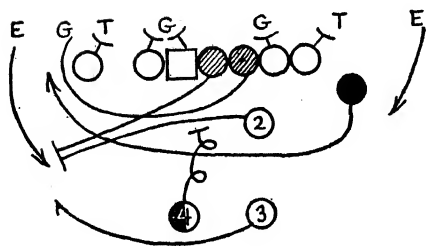


DIAGRAM 57.—A fake reverse, followed by a reverse run after a double spinner.

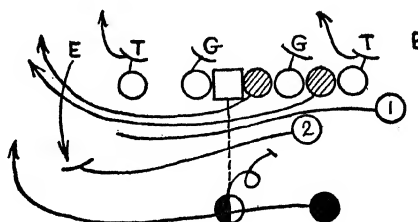


DIAGRAM 58.—A reverse run by the fullback following a spinner.

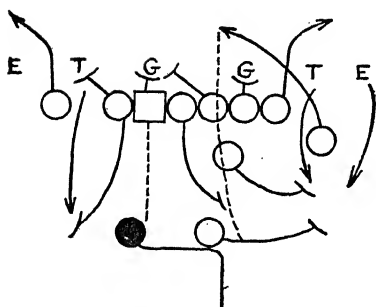
Plays with Tail Back Handling the Ball (*Continued*).

DIAGRAM 59.—A fake end run forward pass.

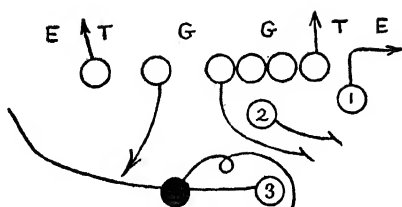


DIAGRAM 60.—A fake reverse forward pass.

A Series of Plays from Single Wing Back Formation with the Fullback Handling the Ball.

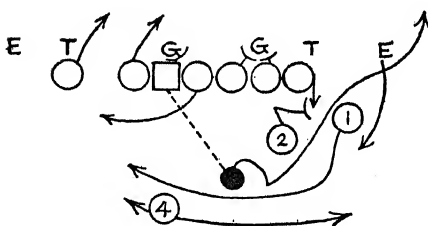


DIAGRAM 61.—A fake reverse, off-tackle run showing angle blocking on the tackle.

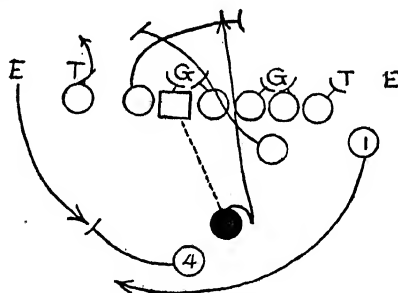


DIAGRAM 62.—A half spin line plunge following a fake reverse.

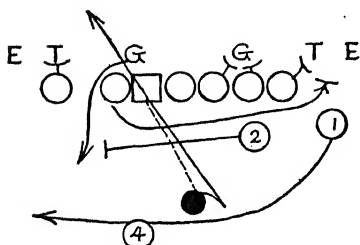
Plays with the Fullback Handling the Ball (*Continued*).

DIAGRAM 63.—A half spin and fake reverse followed by a line plunge with "mouse-trapping" on the short side guard.

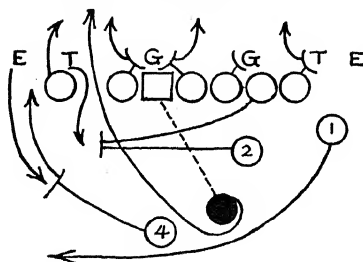


DIAGRAM 64.—A spinner plunge with "mouse-trapping" on the short side tackle after a fake reverse.

accomplished by employing a *six-man line* in which left end Hewitt rushed Baugh relentlessly throughout the contest.

Blocking for the Passer.—The examples above illustrate the vital importance of correct and effective blocking when protecting a forward passer. The protecting teammates should not *charge* forward, to meet the charging defensive opponents. On the other hand, they should hold their positions until their adversaries indicate their intentions. The offense should then actually *block* the path of the defensive players by employing a cross-body block. They should then stay with their opponent to the limit of their ability.

Plays with the Fullback Handling the Ball (*Continued*).

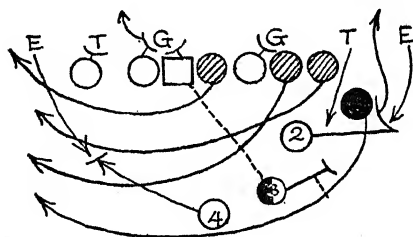


DIAGRAM 65.—A deep reverse to the short side.

Protecting or Covering the Pass.—The second fundamental in pass offense is that of covering the pass. As soon as the pass is thrown, the offensive blockers should quickly deploy fan-like in the direction of the pass to protect against a possible interception and return run. Furthermore, the passer himself should cover his pass immediately after he has released the ball. For this reason, he should try desperately to avoid being tackled or blocked out as the ball leaves his hands. Although all this protection is of vital importance, many coaches fail to emphasize it, with the result that they carelessly lose some games that might otherwise be won.

Avoiding Pass Interceptions.—The third fundamental in the pass attack is that the offense must permit no pass interception and run-back. The passer should throw beyond the receiver. If the receiver cannot get it, the ball will then fall incomplete, and is not likely to be intercepted.

The passer should know definitely the kind of pass he is going to throw. It may be one of two kinds, a spot pass, or a lead pass. The former is thrown to a spot. The receiver arrives at the spot on a definite count. An example of such a position would be one behind

the umpire when he is standing about ten yards behind the defensive line. The ball is thrown about fifteen yards down the center "alley" and the receiver, generally an end or wing back, so times his arrival that he takes the ball high in the air over his shoulder while running at full speed with his back to the passer.

The lead pass is thrown so the receiver runs into the path of the ball. A long lead pass is thrown high over the heads of the secondary defense.

Passing Practice.—Hours of practice will be necessary to perfect a passing attack: One method of improving the pass offense and defense is to play a practice game each week in which nothing but

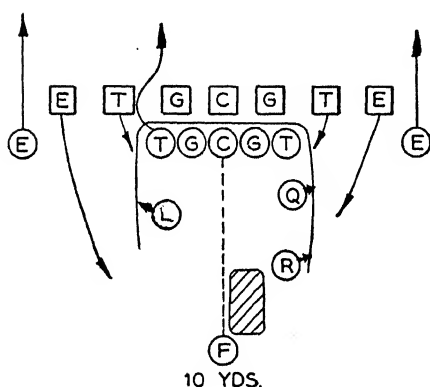


DIAGRAM 66.—Protecting the kicker by the unit or solid-wall method.

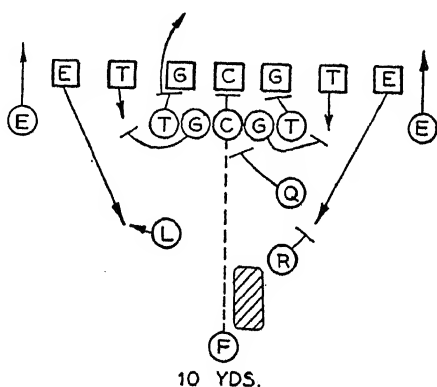


DIAGRAM 67.—Protecting the kicker by man-to-man blocking. Not recommended.

passes are thrown. Three plays may be permitted each side with a fourth down kick unless the necessary yardage is made. Such practice should help a team become pass conscious.

The Kicking Game.—It was stated in another chapter that the punt is the most important play in football. Moreover, the kicking game, including all types of plays which require kicking the ball, is still the most important single phase of the game. Many games are won by expert punting, adequate punt protection, and skilled covering of punts after the ball has been kicked. If a team that is weak defensively can develop a dependable kicking game, it can stave off many defeats which would otherwise occur.

The factors which go to make up a successful and complete kicking game include the center pass, the punter's technique, protection for the kicker, covering kicks, kicking strategy, and blocking kicks. Some of these factors, such as the center pass, the kicker's form, and

line play in protecting the kicker, have been discussed fully elsewhere.

Protecting the Punter.—While it is highly important to protect the passer, adequate protection of the kicker is a vital necessity. Every blocked punt results in the loss of 30 to 40 yards of territory and possible loss of the ball as well. Some teams use a man-for-man defense against the rushing line but the method of setting up a solid wall of players around the kicking area is recommended as the better plan. It is more easily learned by inexperienced players and it lessens the tendency of the protecting blockers to be tricked out of position by the charging defense. (Diagrams 66 and 67).

In defending the kicking area the five center linemen should straighten up slightly from their initial stance, they should spread their elbows so they overlap, they should brace themselves in place with the center of gravity low, and *wait* for the defense to come to them. They must resist all efforts of the opponents to pull or trick them out of position. Each lineman's assignment is to protect his territory until the ball is kicked. After the kick he should hasten to cover the punt. Common sense dictates that it is far better to have a punt returned considerable distance than to have it blocked, although an alert team should avoid each of these outcomes.

The three backs should also defend territory. *They must not rush up to the line of scrimmage to meet an opponent.* In one common method, the backs take one step and face the outside after the ball is passed. They must not play too high and be driven backwards into the kicker's foot. A semi-crouch position is recommended. They should *wait* until the opponents approach and then should charge under their outstretched arms. They should force the defensive men out and around the kicking area rather than try to knock them off their feet.

Covering Kicks.—There are at least two methods of covering kicks, the two wave and the three wave systems. (Diagrams 68 and 69).

In the *two wave system* the entire line goes downfield with the snap of the ball, and the backs block until the kick is made. The line constitutes the first wave, the backs make up the second wave. This method is not recommended for two reasons. Because of inadequate protection the kick is likely to be blocked. In the second place, if the ball-carrier eludes the first wave of linemen, he will succeed in gaining many yards before he encounters the second wave of tacklers.

In the *three wave system*, the ends and one other lineman, usually the left tackle, go downfield at the snap of the ball. They constitute

the first wave. The ends cover the outside and the tackle charges straight toward the safety man. Two counts after the center pass,

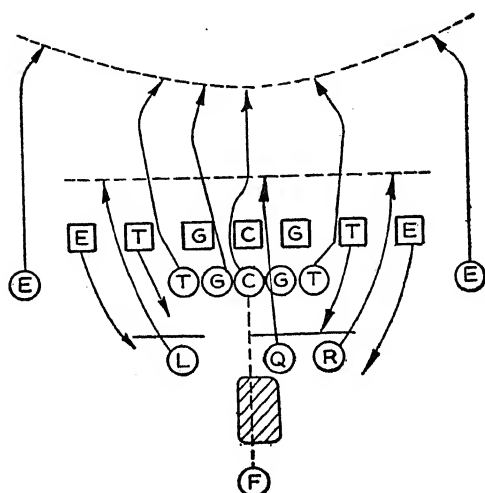


DIAGRAM 68.—The two wave system of covering punts. Not recommended.

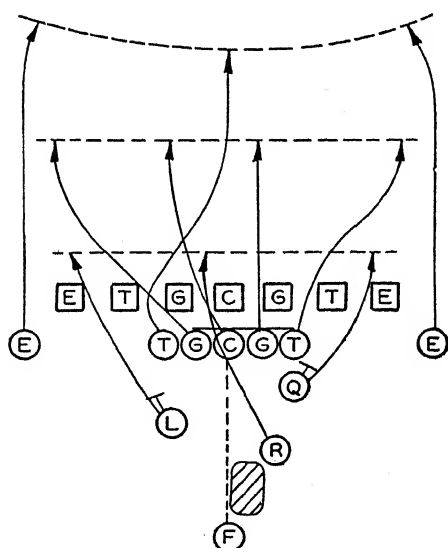


DIAGRAM 69.—The three wave system of covering punts. Recommended.

the remaining linemen fan out and make up the second wave of tacklers. After the kick the three backs also fan out and drive down-field. They are the third wave. The kicker acts as safety man and,

in reality, is a fourth barrier to the return of the punt. This is a safe and conservative method and for that reason is recommended.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the four so-called standard offensive formations? Give the strengths and weaknesses of each and tell why they survived while others did not.
2. Name and illustrate by diagrams the various types of plays included in a complete cycle of plays.
3. What individual player qualifications or characteristics are desirable in each of the eleven positions in a single wing back formation?
4. Diagram an off-tackle play showing the assignments of each player. Diagram a reverse play.
5. What are the advantages of an attack which is nicely balanced to include strong and short side runs, line plunges, forward and lateral passes, and quick kicks.
6. What three fundamentals are vitally important to the success of the pass offense?
7. What elements go to make up the kicking game?
8. What are the advantages of the two wave and the three wave systems of covering kicks?
9. Diagram a plan for protecting the punter, showing individual assignments.
10. Diagram three types of pass plays.

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| T F | 1. Double wing back formation usually includes a balanced line. |
| T F | 2. In a cycle of plays, all start in much the same manner from one formation, but each ends differently from others in the series. |
| T F | 3. A spinner play is a play involving quick deception. |
| T F | 4. The wing back in a single wing back formation should be the best blocker in the backfield. |
| T F | 5. The off-tackle play should be run outside the strong side defensive end. |
| T F | 6. A cut-back play is an angle play. |
| T F | 7. The first fundamental in a pass offense is adequate protection for the passer. |
| T F | 8. The two wave system of covering punts is safer and more conservative than the three wave system. |
| T F | 9. In protecting the punt, the three backfield blockers should charge forward and meet their opponents on the line of scrimmage. |
| T F | 10. Every man on the team, except the passer, should be responsible for covering the pass after it is released by the passer. |

CHAPTER 9

GENERALSHIP AND STRATEGY

The tactics employed in a football game depend upon many factors, including the formation, the style of offense, the strength of the opponent, the experiences in previous games played, the weather and condition of the field, the individual abilities of the members of the team, and the coach's particular theories regarding strategy.

Selecting the Quarterback.—When selecting the proper men for specific positions on his team the football coach must make a careful analysis of his squad and choose these men very carefully. This is particularly true regarding the quarterback. In former years, the signal-caller was selected for his leadership qualities and those high standards have not changed with the passing years. The quarterback should be the keenest and most mentally alert player on the squad. It has been stated that a wrong play called properly has more chance of success than the correct play called improperly. There is an element of truth in this statement but the ability to call plays well requires a fine personality that inspires confidence. Some coaches even like their field leaders to be a little "cocky" if it is not carried so far that it becomes obnoxious.

A good voice is a necessity. A team is unconsciously stimulated to greater efforts if the quarterback barks out his signals confidently and in a rhythmical manner. If signals are called in a jerky manner the team will likely perform that way. On the other hand, if signals are called rhythmically, the team is more likely to respond rhythmically. Even the manner in which the quarterback walks and carries on his other duties will also have its effect on the rest of the team. He must possess the qualities that make a leader.

Since he is often called upon to change the entire offensive strategy on the field and adapt his plays to unexpected or revised defensive strategy, he must develop keen analytical ability. This means frequent conferences with the coach and hours of study of strategical possibilities. This may be done after practice by walking with the coach from the training quarters to the signal-caller's home or rooming house. On trips, the coach and quarterback should ride together, while the former sets up tactical situations for the latter to solve. This keeps the quar-

terback constantly thinking football and permits the coach to criticize constructively. In this way resourcefulness, initiative, confidence, and imagination will be built up.

Types of Offense.—Game tactics depend somewhat upon the style of offense designed by the coach. Some teams still employ the shift attack even though the rules have slowed it down until it no longer has value as a momentum play. The original purpose of the shift was to throw a preponderance of strength of the offense against a particular point in the defense before the defense could assemble sufficient men to stop the attack. The idea was to get to a given point first with the most men. The offense hoped to disorganize the defense and catch it off balance or shifting laterally. Although most coaches today have discarded the former methods of shifting, a majority of teams employ the huddle. This attack still has value for purposes of deception, because the defense tends to watch the evolution of the men rather than the location of the ball.

The Huddle.—The huddle is, in reality, a form of shift. It is used as a method of giving the signals in large stadia where the noise of the crowd interferes with the regular calling of signals. Originally, the play was an unorganized mass of perspiring athletes, but today, if used at all, it is performed in a more orderly manner.

In the huddle, the quarterback should first see that his players are arranged properly so he commands their *undivided* attention. He should then call the proper play and designate the player to carry the ball. It often is helpful to say something along the following lines: "Let's dig in and open up a real hole for Jimmy. Get this boy past the scrimmage line and he will come through with a long run. You fellows have been failing him all through the game with your poor blocking. Let's give him a chance and you know he won't fail you fellows. Let's go." The quarterback must learn to talk to his team with the proper inflection in his voice and with just the right amount of confidence and grim determination. Little "pep" talks of this kind may mean the difference between a winning and losing play. The quarterback should know that "one can catch more bees with honey than with vinegar." In other words, the players respond best to encouragement. If this strategy fails, the field general should go through his entire bag of tricks until he gets the team functioning properly. It may range from pleading to threatening physical action on the backsliding players until they respond with their very best efforts.

Signals.—The huddle system of calling signals is the simplest method known. The play may be numbered and the quarterback

merely calls "16 right" or "12 left." Players are not compelled to go through a complicated system of mathematics in order to determine the signal. They can concentrate on their assignment for that particular play and can plan their course of action accordingly. If the signals are called, the system should be as simple as possible for the reasons stated above. Phrases were used in the early days of football. "Tom" received a good "bawling out" and then "Dick" ran with the ball. At one time players were lettered. Vowels were given to some backs and consonants to others. Numbers were later introduced, but the system at first was extremely complicated. The players and the spaces between them were numbered, but confusion arose when split bucks, reverses, and triple passes came into vogue. Finally, the coaches began to number each play and this method is in common use today. If the signals are called, the play number may be given as one in a series of three or four numbers, as 21-(16)-34, with 16 as the play. The play number may be designated by the last digit of the first number and the first digit of the second number, as 2(1-6)4-92, with 16 as the number. A variety of combinations may be used for the signal if they are simple and easy for the boys to learn.

A Strategy Squad.—Every normal boy, who plays football, is interested in learning about the strategic possibilities which make the game unique and fascinating. One of the best ways to learn the strategy of the game is to organize a *strategy squad* among the players, or join such a squad already organized by the coach. All quarterbacks, captains, and other interested team members should belong. This group should study strategy maps and charts of games previously played. They should talk over the opponents' style of play and the best methods of using the individual abilities of teammates to the greatest advantage. Quarterbacks should practice signal-calling, and captains should learn proper decisions on the rules. All might well play indoor football games to develop the ability to choose plays under varying conditions. Such a study of tactics should result in what is popularly referred to as a "smart" team.

Teaching Strategy.—In addition to his work with a strategy squad the coach should spend additional time, as stated above, with his quarterbacks. Strategy is a difficult thing to teach young players. It must be done in a systematic manner and through logical reasoning. The coach must *NEVER* "second-guess" his field general's judgment in such a manner that the latter will lose confidence in himself. The end result will be lack of confidence in the quarterback's judgment by the entire team. Criticism by the coach must

be of a constructive nature and encouraging in character. (Diagrams 70, 71 and 72).

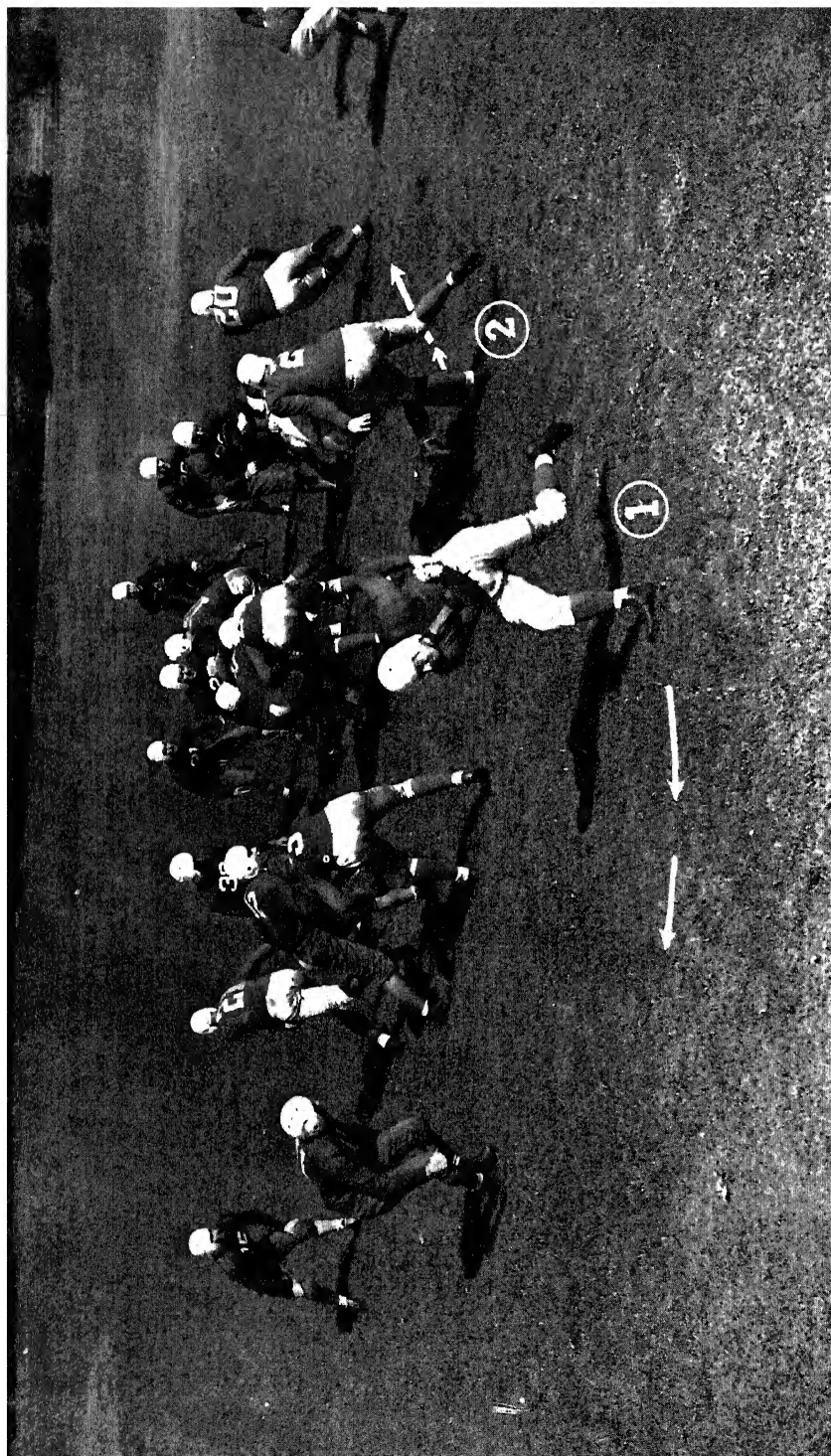
Strategy must be built in the quarterback's mind step by step. One method is to develop a strategy map or chart of the playing field. This map should divide the field into zones. The coach should then set up certain fundamentals of generalship which must not be violated by the signal-caller, except under very unusual circumstances.

Punting Strategy.—The quarterback must learn early in his career that the punt is *an offensive weapon* and should be used accordingly. It may, however, be used as a *defensive weapon* as the occasion demands. The quarterback, who calls for a punt *when in doubt* is seldom, if ever, wrong. He should know that it is best to punt: on *first down inside the ten yard line*; on first or second down between the 10 and 20 yard lines; no later than third down in the 20 to 40 yard zone; and on last down beyond the 40 yard line.

Every down, which the quarterback delays, beyond the limits indicated above in calling for a punt, increases the possibility of a blocked kick. The closer to the goal line the punt is blocked the greater the probability of scoring a touchdown against the kicking team. Playing for time by holding the ball; holding the ball for one or two downs, when facing a strong wind with a few seconds left to play at the end of the first and third periods; and after stopping a strong offensive drive close to the end of either half in the shadows of the goal line,—these are three of the very few exceptions to the above fundamentals of punt strategy. (Diagram 70).

The quarterback should use the punt as an offensive weapon when he has a fair or better than average kicker and the wind at his back. Under these conditions he should call for a punt on first down, urge his team to stop the opposing offensive drive, and concentrate on returning the punt in order to gain possession of the ball as close to scoring territory as possible. With an exceptional punter available, the quarterback should not tire his team unduly by running the ball in his own territory.

Forward Pass Strategy.—After years of experience it seems safe to state that it is easier to teach a quarterback *when not to pass* than it is to teach him *when to pass*. More games have probably been lost through ridiculous use of the forward pass than by means of any other single phase of football. It certainly is foolish to call a pass play late in the game, when ahead, or early in the game, or early in the second half, with the score even and the ball deep in one's own territory. It is far better under these conditions to punt rather than



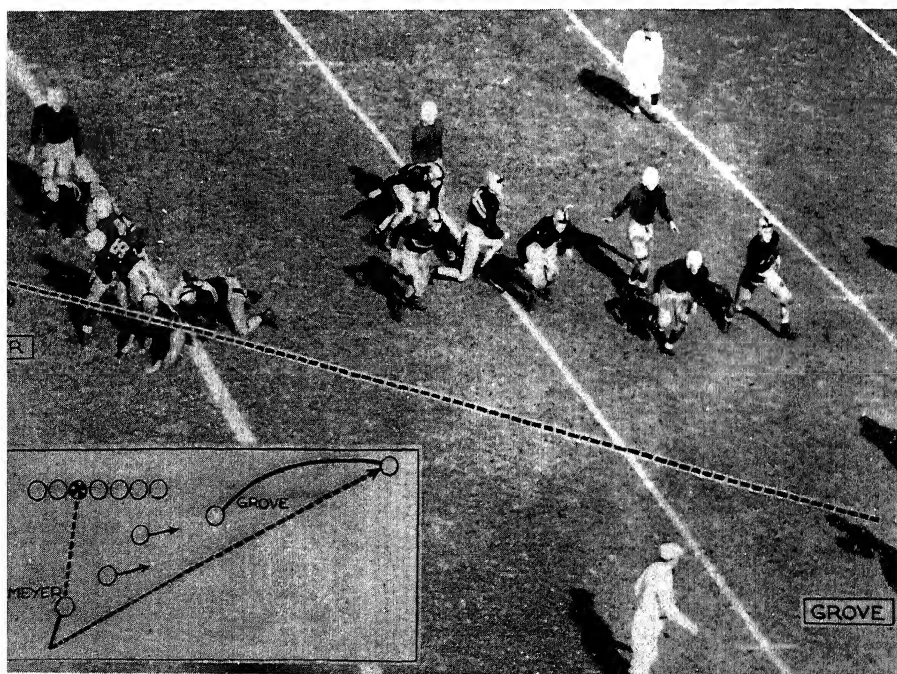
DOUBLE WING BACK FORMATION: Number 1 fakes as though he had the ball. Number 9, the blocking back, blocks the end. Number 20 leads the interference. Number 2, although not five yards

"Pic" (FPG)



Keystone (FPG)

AN END RUN: The man with the ball circles his own right end for a long gain. The defensive end, Number 55, has smashed in at such a sharp angle he was blocked farther in so the ball-carrier ran around him. (Army vs. Yale, 1935.)



Keystone (FPG)

PASS: A short flat pass to the wing back.

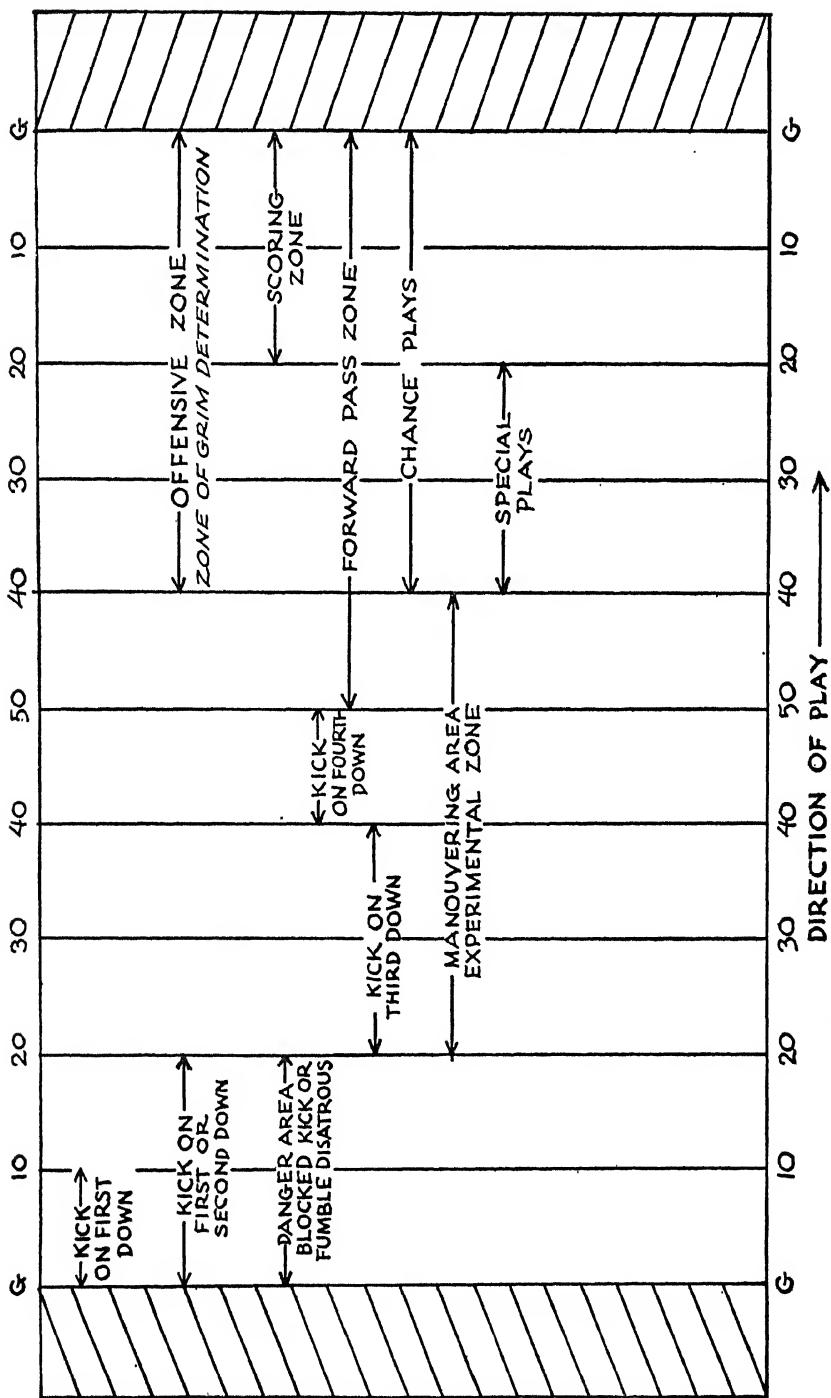


Diagram 70.—A strategy map showing the kicking and passing areas.

risk the possible interception of a pass with the usual disastrous results. It is equally unwise to change to a passing attack near the opponents' goal if the running plays have been gaining ground consistently.

During the past few seasons, the use of the pass has become more pronounced and daring. It is not unusual to see the pass thrown from a position deep in the offensive team's own territory. Such tactics call for exceptional passing skill and adequate coverage of the pass. It also requires a sturdy defense to repel the opponents if the pass is intercepted. In the final analysis, it is a daring maneuver that calls for exceptional skill and courage on the part of coach and players and careful preparation on the practice field.

Selection of Plays.—If the quarterback aspires to become skilled in the selection of plays, he must organize and classify them in his mind so he will know where and how each should be used. The most fundamental classification is the long-gainer and short-gainer grouping. Long-gainer plays may lose yardage and are of the gambling or chance type. While there is some probability of loss, the chances of gain are also quite large. Moreover, long-gainer plays often have the effect of making other plays more successful.

Long-gainer plays include wide sweeps to either side, cut-back plays, spinners of various types, forward and lateral passes, and any other type of play where there exists the probability of some loss and considerable gain in yardage.

Short-gainer plays are just what the name implies. They are almost certain to reach the line of scrimmage and the chances of a small gain are high. Straight bucks and slants off either tackle are typical plays of this type. A situation consisting of third down and one yard to go, calls for a play in which the possibility of losing ground is negligible and in which the probability of gaining great yardage is also quite limited. For this reason, a slant off the offensive strong side tackle at about a 45 degree angle is one of the best possible plays to call. It should be added, however, if the defense expected a short-gainer play, it might be good strategy to gamble even on third down. If the third down play fails, a gambling type of play or a punt should be employed on fourth down. (Diagram 71).

In addition to having a clear classification of plays at his instant command, *the quarterback must know the best man to execute each play.* With first down and ten yards to gain, it is advisable to use the best man on his most successful play. This is one of the best guarantees of making the necessary yardage. Frequently, the "climax" runner is not the most dependable ball-carrier on short-gainer plays. He may

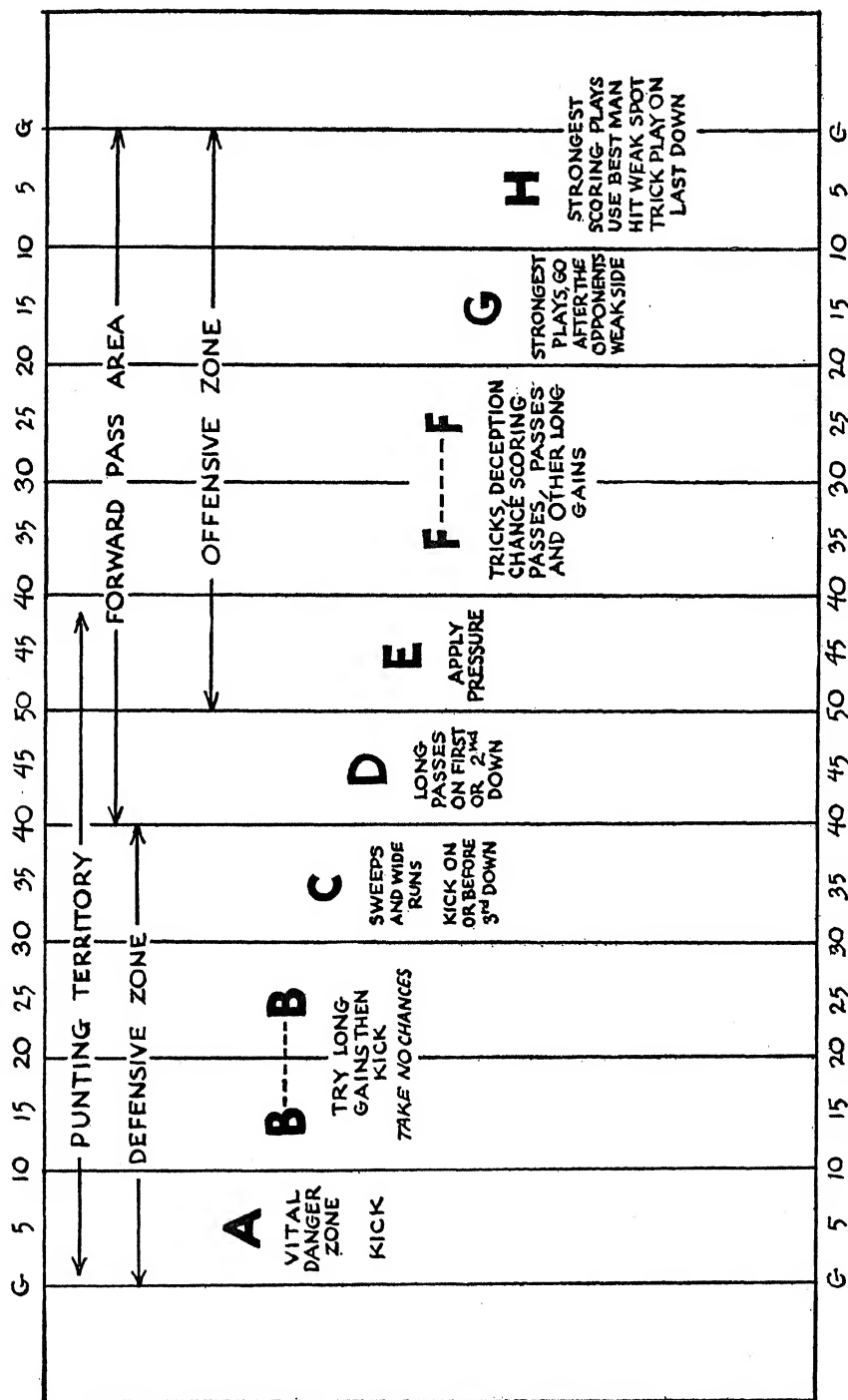


DIAGRAM 71.—A strategy map showing the type of play to use in each 10-yard zone.

even be of very little use inside the scoring zone. The short-gainer player is usually the sturdiest runner, i.e., he is the plugging type with a high degree of determination in his make-up. In general, it may be said that the touchdown play is the favorite or most successful play of the best ball-carrier.

Position Plays.—Since position on the field is often more important than possession of the ball, the quarterback must learn to secure proper position at all times. Most teams and a majority of backs run plays better to their right than to the left. Some runners can dodge or sidestep only to their right and are quite helpless when trying to do the reverse. The well-coached team and player today should be able to run left or right. If a team is unable to gain regularly to the right, it should be able to gain from left formation or better still it should have a powerful and deceptive set of short side plays from right formation. If the quarterback finds he can gain in only one direction, and, if a series of plays to one side brings him near the side line, he should play a sweep play back to the other side of the field and start all over again. The latter is called a position play. Special side line plays or one which brings the ball out in front of the goal posts for a possible kick are examples of position plays.

How the Score Effects Strategy.—The quarterback must learn to play at all times in relation to the score. In other words, he should play conservatively when ahead. This means the elimination of chance plays, where there is any element of danger of the other team gaining possession of the ball, by interception or otherwise, in scoring territory. When behind in the score, caution should be largely thrown aside. The game might about as well be lost by 100 points as by a single point, if the one point defeat is due to too much caution. When behind, late in the game, some coaches advise the throwing of long, gambling passes. But all well coached teams have their secondary drawn well back in such situations to play for the interception of long desperate last-minute passes. It would seem to be much better strategy to attempt to execute short passes where the percentage of completions is greater. Moreover, if a few well executed running plays are mixed with the pass plays, the desperate quarterback will have a greater chance of success.

Calling Plays in Sequence.—Another important factor in generalship is that of calling plays in sequence. By a sequence play is meant a combination of two or more plays which appear to start alike but which in reality hit the defensive line in different places. For example, the 1921 Pennsylvania State team used a series of three

plays in sequence which was very successful against opponents. These plays included the standard off-tackle run, a reverse between the short-side tackle and end, and a half-spinner, fake reverse with a plunge over center. They were executed from the same backfield alignment and at a high rate of speed. By lining up speedily and running the plays off fast an attempt was made to prevent the opponents from getting set defensively. These three plays were supplemented by a short pass over center and an occasional sweep outside the strong-side end. In addition, a long reverse pass was available to keep the secondary back a respectable distance and prevent them from reinforcing the line too quickly. A few years ago a Notre Dame team defeated a strong and rugged Minnesota team rather easily by using just three plays; an end run to the strong side, the standard off-tackle play, and a short-side buck. The halfback carried the ball on the end run and off-tackle play and faked these two plays with the fullback plunging back to the short side.

It is impossible for a quarterback to use every play in his repertoire. He must determine largely by the trial and error method just what plays he should use for the game. Unsuccessful plays should be discarded for the day unless used for position or build-up purposes. Among his successful plays, he is almost certain to find a combination which can be run advantageously in sequence. He should rely on these plays and call them as the occasion demands.

The signal-caller should always be thinking two to three plays ahead of his own teammates and the defense. This means that while he is calling an off-tackle run, for example, he should tentatively decide, at least, what he is going to call on the next one or two downs. Obviously, this can only be done within limits, depending on the amount of ground gained and other factors. If the proper yardage is not gained, he must be ready to change tactics completely. Such possible changes in strategy should always be in the back of his mind.

During practice sessions the coach should be sure his quarterback calls each play in accordance with the position of the ball on the field. It is advisable for the coach to set up imaginary strategical situations. The more difficult these are the better trained the quarterback will become. Such situations should closely approach actual game conditions.

Faults of Quarterbacks.—Most quarterbacks have two serious faults: they call signals with their heads "buried" in the ground; and they seldom look over the defensive alignment of the opponents. They

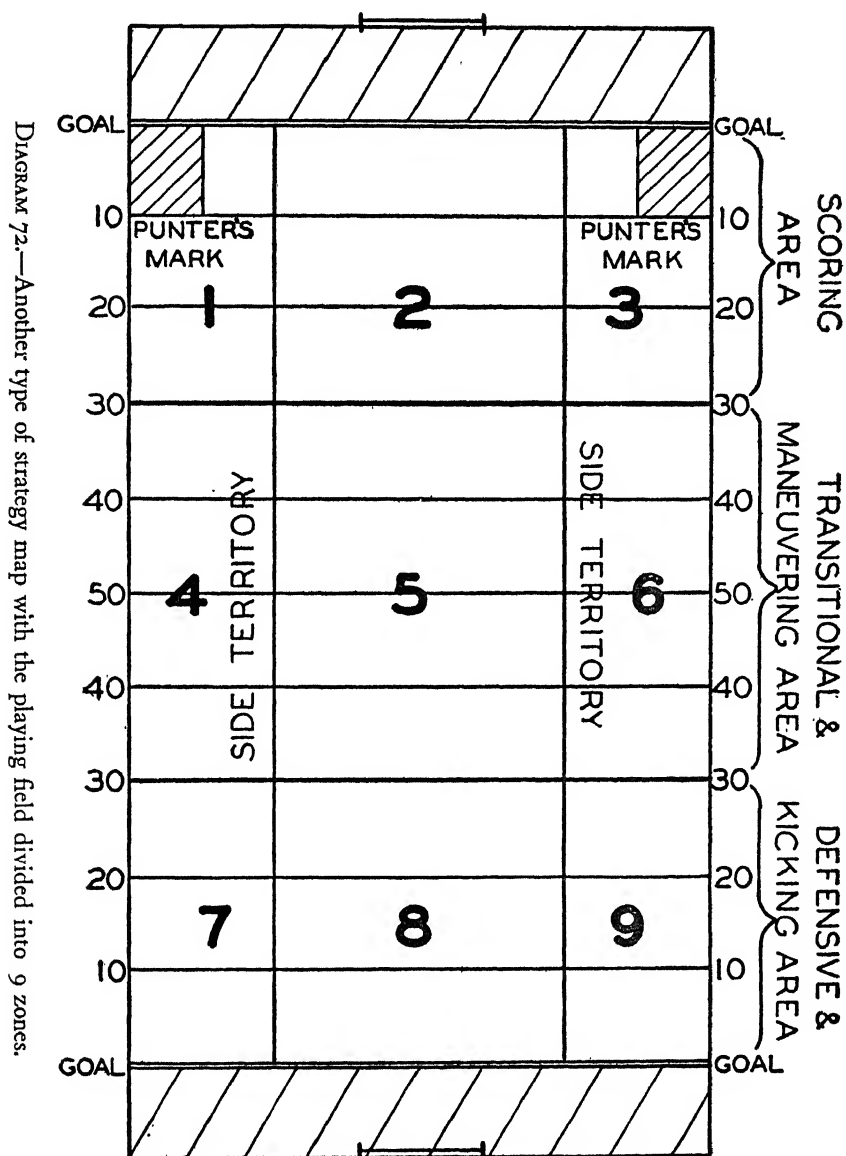
seldom note how close the secondary is playing and very often they neglect to look over the spacing of the defensive line. It is utterly impossible for a quarterback to efficiently call plays if these important facts are overlooked. The quarterback must know exactly how the defensive line has shifted in order to call plays to check its defensive maneuvers. The quarterback can secure some very valuable training by occasionally attending the practice sessions of the defensive line. In this way, he can learn when it is over shifted and when individual players are out of position.

Playing the Opponent's Weaknesses.—The quarterback must learn how to call plays in order to confuse his opponents. To do this, he should have a sound system of offensive plays at his command and he should know the individual abilities of all the players on his team. This is very difficult in modern football with the many substitutions and the everchanging personnel. In addition, he must watch for any weaknesses that will surely develop in the defense. Before the starting signal is given, he should look carefully over the defensive line from end to end, and note any unusual spacing between linemen. Moreover, he should note the position of the five men backing up the line. If any opponents are out of position, he should carefully note this fact and use it to the advantage of his team or save it for an emergency providing the time is not ripe. It is excellent strategy to "save" or "nurse" a glaring weakness of the opposing team for an emergency or for the touchdown play. Naturally, if it is brought to the attention of the opposing coach, he will substitute and attempt to remedy the situation.

The quarterback must also maintain a careful balance between his running and passing attack, i.e., not too much of the running game, and not too much of the passing attack. He must remember that the running game builds up the efficiency of the passing attack and vice versa.

Thinking Under Fire.—Finally, the quarterback must *never get panicky* and throw sound strategy to the winds. He must remain cool under fire and *think-think-think*. The destiny of his team rests entirely in his hands. He should never refuse advice from his teammates but neither should he be dominated by them. He should remember he is calling the plays and all the spectators are assuming he is calling them. He will be blamed if the play is wrong; consequently, he should use his own head to prevent mistakes. On the other hand, he should receive all the credit when he does the correct thing. Finally, the coach should staunchly support him in every way. This strength-

ens his position on the squad and is a determining factor in sound quarterback strategy.



The Strategy Map.—Every boy who plays football should be familiar with the strategy map. It may be divided into as many zones as the boy or the coach desires. These zones should be numbered and players should learn which plays in their cycle should be played

in each zone on the field. The field may be divided into three transverse and three longitudinal areas. The transverse areas are commonly called: the kicking or danger zone; the maneuvering zone; and the scoring zone. The longitudinal division of the field gives two sideline territories, which the quarterback should avoid as much as possible, and a middle area, which affords great possibilities for versatility of attack. (Diagram 72).

Zones 7, 8, and 9 (Diagram 72) constitute the kicking area. Zones 7 and 9 should be avoided, if possible. In zone 8 the quarterback should kick on an early down. He may be guided somewhat by the ten yard lines and kick on: first down, if within the ten yard mark; second down, if within the twenty yard mark; and third down, when inside the thirty yard line. When the ball is downed within zones 7 or 9, the quarterback should attempt to run it out into zone 8.

Zones 4, 5, and 6 are known as the transitional, or maneuvering area. Again the side territories should be avoided, if this is at all possible. When in zones 4 and 6, quick driving plays down the sideline, reverse plays down the side, lateral passes, and short sideline passes are indicated. Zones 6 and 9 are both extremely dangerous for a right-footed kicker. Zone 5 is the area for long-gainer plays, such as long forward passes, lateral passes, triple passes, trick plays, quick kicks, and all kinds of chance plays. The aim here is to find the opponent's weakness and by means of a long gain to carry the ball into scoring territory.

Zones 1, 2, 3 constitute the scoring area and the signal-caller should plan to score as soon as possible. Punch should be put into the attack, and the best possible scoring plays should be used on first down. Passes should not be used if the running attack is working. If forced to kick, the quarter should maneuver into zone 2 for place or drop kicking. Zones 1 and 3 contain the punter's marks, and if forced to punt in the transitional area, he should attempt to kick out of bounds inside the ten yard line.

In any area on the field the quarterback should use his long or best gainers on first down, in an attempt to keep ahead of the defense, much as a pitcher in baseball tries to keep the batter "in-the-hole." If five yards can be gained on first down, it will be easier to gain the remaining five yards in three downs. Unless a team has a powerful plunging attack, it is not wise ordinarily to attempt bucks on first down. The averages are against the success of the play, and if only a yard or two is gained, the quarterback is in the hole immediately. Occasionally, a quarterback will try to plunge after a penalty and

when ten or fifteen yards are needed. This is likely to be a futile play unless employed as a trick to fool the defense. The choice of plays depends largely on the way the defense lines up and shifts to meet the offense. If the cycle of plays is not complete and equally strong at all points along the defensive line, the attack can easily be stopped.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES.—The following guiding principles in generalship have been found valuable.

1. Punt when other plays have failed.
2. Punt on first down in the danger zone; punt on second or third down in the kicking zone.
3. Punt on fourth down in the kicking and transitional areas, even with small yardage needed.
4. Don't give up the ball on downs except inside the 10 yard line.
5. Have a fake pass from punt formation to prevent opponents from rushing the kick.
6. Keep in the middle of the field.
7. Play safe, if ahead.
8. Take chances, if behind.
9. Use a long punt pass if necessary to pass in the danger zone.
10. Use long-gainers on early downs.
11. Use plunges and sure gainers for short yardage.
12. Use plays in sequence. Do not rely on two or three plays.
13. Do not forward pass
 - a. With the score even and in the danger zone or late in the game.
 - b. When ahead in the second half.
 - c. When nearing the opponent's goal line if the running attack is working.
14. Remember which plays have been working.
15. Use wide plays if the defensive line plays tight, and vice versa.
16. Use running plays and short passes if the defensive backs play back for passes.
17. Quick-kick over the safety man if he comes up into the pass defense, and use long passes if he stays back under punts.
18. Learn which players are best fitted to run each play.
19. Learn which plays are to be used in each zone on the field, that is, which are scoring plays, which are sideline plays, etc.

A Game Chart.—Only a few of the principles governing the tactics employed in a game can be given here. A *chart* should be kept of each game, and it should contain everything, including: plays used; player carrying the ball; yards gained and lost; first downs; penalties; fumbles; passes tried and completed; yards gained by passing; and punts, with the number, distance, and averages. By studying the chart, the mistakes of the previous game can be noted and avoided.

Defensive Strategy.—Defensive tactics depend entirely upon the offensive tactics employed. A knowledge of the latter is essential for the successful execution of the former. As a general rule, the defense will play higher and wider on first downs, or in areas where long gainers are to be expected. It will play lower and closer on later downs and when short yardage is needed. The defense should not be content with stopping the play, but should aim at all times to get possession of the ball.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Upon what factors do the tactics employed in a football game depend?
2. What are the arguments for and against the huddle shift?
3. What system of signals do you consider most feasible for high school and college teams?
4. What are the nature and purposes of a strategy squad?
5. Diagram a strategy map showing defensive, transitional, and scoring zones, punter's mark, punt and forward pass areas, territory for long-gainer plays, and area for strongest scoring plays.
6. Devise a set of signals and indicate the area or zone on the field in which each play in the complete cycle of plays is to be used.
7. Write out a list of principles to guide the quarterback in his tactics and strategy.
8. In what ways does the score effect strategy?
9. Make a list of rules governing punting strategy. Forward pass strategy.
10. What principles should govern the defensive strategy?

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| T F | 1. The quarterback shows poor generalship if he loses the ball on downs. |
| T F | 2. The quarterback, whose team is on its own 35 yard line, the score even, fourth down, and 6 inches to go, should punt. |
| T F | 3. The ideal time to pass is on third down. |
| T F | 4. The quarterback, whose team is between its own 10 and 30 yard line, should pound his opponent's weak spot. |
| T F | 5. The offense should punt on or before the fourth down in the kicking area, even with only a small yardage to go. |
| T F | 6. The offense should not give up the ball on downs except inside the 10 yard line. |
| T F | 7. It is good strategy to use a fake-pass from punt formation occasionally, to slow down the defense in rushing the kick. |
| T F | 8. The punt should not be used as an offensive weapon. |
| T F | 9. It is poor strategy to call a pass play late in the game, if ahead in the score. |
| T F | 10. The quarterback should use each play in his entire repertoire at some time during each game. |

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